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ST. SOLIFER

WITH OTHER

WORTHIES AND UNWORTHIES

BY

JAMES VILA BLAKE

CHICAGO
CHARLES H. KERR AND COMPANY
1891

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PREFACE.

I find I must post the sign of King Nigressus. I learn from the younger Montaltus (by his more glorious name, Lepidus) that the seventh Nigressus, King of Null-Ibi, carried the splendor of the court far beyond any of his ancestors, and especially was magnificent in his gardens. He had many evergreens, which, in convenient corners or under thick shrubbery, he trimmed into the shapes of lions, tigers, and other wild beasts, and robbers. Now, as he threw his gardens open to the people and they flocked thither in the evenings, they mistook those fantastic trees for fierce brutes and enemies lying in wait; by which they so were frightened out of their wits that Nigressus, to save himself from ruling over a crazed nation, set up a sign at the gate, illuminated at night, telling the people they should not fear, and the fierce shapes which they might come on, seeming to be crouching in lairs, were not wild beasts, but very tame trees cunningly trimmed. Now, some

persons who kindly have read some of these stories, have been misled grievously, mistaking for real things what were only my whittlings. Wherefore I post this notice.

But some reader may say, "Are they all whittlings?" Not so, friend; some are real. "How then shall I know the real from your whimseys?" Gentle reader, 'tis but a matter of coming close enough. For however a trimmed tree may look like a lion, it feels not like a lion when you lay a hand on it.

Likewise, if any one object that I have mingled things far and near, of this age and others (which minglings the learned call "anachronisms"), I own I mind more the likeness of things than the times of them. What things draw together by nature, I let do so on my page, though one be as old as Methuselah and one as fresh as this day's sunrise. My palate would taste no anachronism in joining to itself some Falernian, though vintaged for Horace.

J. V. B.

Chicago, Illinois, 1891.

ST. SOLIFER.

There were two of the name Prosper Montaltus, father and son. Both of them were writers. It is from the son that I have the story of the sunny ink. Though both writers, the likeness ends there. The father was a "grave and reverend seignior." He left many learned tomes which stand for a year in the library, as they were left at last dusting, till they be taken down to be dusted again. In truth, he was a very learned man; but he labored so hard with his learning, and so piled it up, like one hill placed for a bridge over others, and so interlocked and built up like a pyramid to the skies, that if the reader climb one cone after him, it is only to butt his head against the mountain saddled 'twixt that and another, and so on, however one strive to follow him. In truth, as I said, he labored so hard with his learning that it is past the labor of a common reader to dig out again what he has pounded under with his weighty rammer. This would have been better if his themes had been light, for sometimes heavy learning with a light subject is

like a big sail on a little boat, and makes it scud well, catching all the air stirring, every puff that can help on. But the elder Montaltus took themes as heavy as his erudition, and the themes being so solid, when they were freighted with the learning to boot, there was no mind able to be more than a well or quicksand to them, in which they sunk to the bottom and were gone. Many of his works turn on theology, and these are as dry and dead as the cast skins of locusts which have a semblance as if they might move, but all that is living has kicked them off. Besides this, he discusses Quinsay and Cambalu, the *Terra Magellanica*, Adricomius on the Arabian Phœnix, Esmellin in Muscovia, the Cirknickzerskey Lake, the Mountain Ybouyabab, the demonstrations *de crepusculis* of Avius and Nonius, and other such like learned lumber, hard to fell, and not worth the ax when it is on the ground. This was Montaltus the elder. But a different sort was his son. Whether he were so wise as his father, I cannot say, for who can argue wisdom from such a lumber garret of a head as the elder made for himself withal? But certain it is that he was a kingdom's worth more merry; and if there be wisdom in being lightsome and jocund, he had more real science in one finger than the elder heavy-weight in the whole of him. 'Tis true that

he wrote not big books like his father, but the one which he did write snuffs not the dust for a year together on the shelf; no, but rather the laughter and merry twinkles and bright tears of many readers, both grave and gay, and brave and gentle, that repair to him. This book is but a record of himself, which he calls "De Vita Mea;" and as he could not have a more whimsical subject, so there could not be a more jocund work. There are different editions of it, and they bear some one name, some another; which I must remark lest any of my readers who have met the book and been happy with it, should be perplexed that I call it the work of the younger Montaltus, since they have known it as the book of Lepidus. And indeed, I like better to know it by this name, since this he conferred on himself, while the other he got but from that stuffed-pate, his father, who, whatever else he knew, knew his son as little as Launcelot was known by old Gobbo, "his true begotten father, who, being more than sand-blind, high gravel blind, knew him not;" and, like Launcelot, "the humorous youth did "try confusion" with this same lumber-closet, his father's noddle. I mean, the rogue played the elder many a wanton trick. But this is no matter, for the father knew it not, nor ever thought himself joked, and the brisk boy had to be audience

for his own laughter. But, as I said, he gained a new name for himself; for after he had done pranks, quips, quirks and mummeries enough (which, indeed, was before his beard came), the people added Lepidus to his name, whereby he was called no longer Prosper Montaltus the younger, but Prosper Montaltus Lepidus, and at last only Lepidus, as one who had made a name for himself, and no longer need hang on his father's. 'Tis a book past describing for its conceits and whims, this account of himself; yea, and sometimes tear-drawing, too, for the boy had a heart in him, and he smiled so much with his eyes as well as laughed with his mouth, that tears were like to follow, and so, too, in those who read him. Pure glee and simple pathos are close akin; yes, and goodness, too, by example of St. Philip Neri, who was sportive and jolly. It were wise to follow him rather than Bernard, who boasted, that he "only ate his dinner, but never tasted it." If I wished to tell here many of the oddities of Lepidus, I could not, because it is long ago that I read his book, and now I have it not by me. It were a feat of a memory which I have not to keep hold of so many pranks and so much odd talk; so that it stays with me rather as general light in my mind (which often serves to break through my vapors) than as a gleaming

of bright points, one here and another there. Some things have stuck by me. One is his whimsical conceits with his sisters. He had two sisters, who never agreed about their brother, but in all points were opposite. One would have his hair long, and the other short. One had a great liking to him in red, and the other could bear him in no clothing but bottle-green. This gave Lepidus a vast trouble, if we may credit the serious face with which he tells his grievance. For his sisters were no little shrewish; at least, it pleases his humor to make them so; so that if he wore green, one berated him, and if red, the other flouted him; and if neither, both set on him—for though they agreed not in what they liked, they agreed in disliking all else. He said that he had less trouble about his hair because, as he must be clothed in some way, it was certain that either both or one would scorn him every day; whereas, there was a point at which both were silent concerning his tonsure. If his hair were long, the one fell on him, and if short, the other; but as, if short, it must grow, there must come a point, forsooth, at which it was too long to be called short, and too short to be called long; at which point he tells us gravely that he had for some days peace and love with his sisters. As to his garments, he appeared one

day with much gravity before them, with raiment made symmetrically in two parts perpendicularly, —one-half of him the favored red of one sister, and the other half the bottle-green admired by the other. Much did he rejoice, he tells us, when he hit on this plan, thinking that now he should please both the maidens. And he solemnly vowed he would wear the attire at all times, on Sabbaths as well as common days, on festivals and court days, and all days, till his humor should change; and he was like to stay in his present vein a good stretch. And, indeed, he was happy, he says, and had peace ever after, though not in the way he had conceived. For his fantastic obedience pleased them not at all, and they joined to wrangle with him, each flouting her adverse half. But, says he, I found to my delight and surprise that I was deaf to their clamor, let them wrangle as they would. For as each one could din but at a half of me, and it took the whole of me to understand and be sensible, I had no consciousness of either of them, and lived in delightful quietude thereafter. For a man, he argues, might be cut in two as well by a sword as by his clothes for all he could understand anything said to a half of him.

I have told about Lepidus that I may tell

the story of St. Solifer from him. I have met it nowhere else; at which, being surprised, I have even made search for it with no result; whence it is plain either that Lepidus invented it, or that it was one of those country legends that, like many of the simple folk, never traveled from the homestead. I take it to be the latter, for Lepidus invented raillery and quips, but no stories, I think. But he was a great gatherer of people's talk, for he had a heart for it and for them. Here is the story: There was a monastery called the Holy House. Lepidus says not where it was; but no doubt it was in his neighborhood. He gives it another name, which I have forgotten; but the Holy House, he says, was the style in which the people spoke of it, for the brothers who lived in it were very austere. At any rate, 'tis certain they were very strict with the poor folk who came to be shrived; and it was given out that they were as strict with themselves. One night there came a pull at the monastery bell, and at the gate was found a wretched stranger. He was crippled, sick, poor and famished. When they had taken him in and he had come to life enough to talk, they found he was a great sinner besides; and he prayed the holy men that he might hide himself and his sins forever within their walls. They granted it, but they laid

on him long and hard penances. He bore them humbly, and began to grow in grace. Here Lepidus, I remember, gives many instances and signs of the work of the Spirit observed in him; but it were no matter to follow him in these, even if I could recall them. Suffice it that it seems not so much that the poor man buried his sins within the walls, as rather that they took flight away from him. For he kept his humble state, and strove and prayed only that he might to-day surpass his yesterday. Ah, Memory! happy is it for a poor mortal when thou hast become a well of charity! So was it with this stranger. His sins, as I have said, seemed to fly away, like earth taken out of a well and scattered afar. And when then we look down into the place, behold, pure water has risen. I mean when the sins were gone, the pit of them became a well of charity. It was noticed that the humble man, who had borne the shame and labor of his own penances meekly, was very soft-hearted toward others who were in penance. He seemed to have a kind of measuring eye in his heart, like to that in the head of a mechanic who can guess closely at the weight of a mass of stone or iron or at the height of a wall. He seemed in like manner to rate the weight of a sin, a penance, a sorrow, in his own heart, and to know how

heavy it was. After a time, when his vows were fulfilled and he began to shrive the simple folk, it was noticed that they loved to come to him for their confessor. And it was seen either that the poor people kept back their sins from him, or else that only the less sinful sort came to him, or else that he made their errors not so heavy matters as the other brothers, judging by his light penances. Then began he to visit in the houses of the simple people, and in the straits and strains of their life he was much besought by them. It was at this time, after thus slowly some years had passed (for this grace, I remember Lepidus says, is a plant of slow growth, and thereupon goes into many good remarks, not without the merry humor which edged all subjects with him, like sunlight behind a cloud running over the edge of it), that the good man began to write. He had no learning, but he could use the tongue of the people, and it was this, not the Latin, in which he wrote. He composed little treatises on life—sometimes no more than a few sentences, gentle and sweet sayings, full of comfort and hope; sometimes little chapters on sins and virtues, or the great points of life, like birth and death, baptism and conversion, and the sacraments. These writings were very simple, and not for the brothers' eyes, but written

always for some one among the poor folk and set to the tune of his need or his trouble.

Now, as the pen worked, it grew in grace as the man had. The writings became richer and richer, clearer, and sweeter and more comforting. At last, one day, the wonder happened from which the saint's name came—Solifer, or Sunbearer. A sorrow and a sin in a poor peasant had stirred his heart mightily, and when he returned to his cell, he bethought him of some words which came with wondrous beauty and hope in them for the poor soul, and straightway he set himself to write them down for him; but when he dipped his pen in the ink and so came to the paper, lo! what was black in the bottle, on the paper was a golden light. This was a sight indeed! Here was a miracle. The saint crossed himself and looked again. There it was before his eyes: the ink in the bottle was black, and on his pen the same; but when it flowed on the parchment, it was as if he had dipped his pen in sunshine. I am not quick at pictures, and I cannot see in my mind to tell how the saint acted at this moment, nor, I think, could Lepidus, for this he passes by, if I remember; but I recall this remark he makes, that to behold a dark thing turn to beams of light is to see with God. Lepidus tells that soon the whole brotherhood,

with their abbot, were gathered about the saint, watching the letters of light from his pen. The pen would not write without supply. When the ink was gone, then no light came forth; but when dipped again in the black liquid, then did the letters of light run again upon the parchment, and it beamed like the sun. Now, the abbot was a shrewd soul. He had regard to the treasury, and it was his mind that the Church should be rich. Wherefore to his eyes the letters of light were but gold letters. 'Tis true they shone wondrously, but that was only a matter of a little polish. If gold could flow from a pen at all, why not burnished gold, thought the abbot. Whereupon the precious sheets were hustled away to the goldsmith, that the holy man might be assured on this point; and great dreams did he dream of the gain to be made by the hand of the new saint, who should write all day at his bidding. Nay, the worthy man did even dream that the saint's power might be developed by practice till he should grow to converting a bottle of ink to an ingot of gold. But the goldsmith dashed him. There was no gold in the shining script. "The devil," said the abbot; and "the devil," cried all the monks in chorus. What, indeed, but the devil could work such a delusion and snare, such a promise to the eye, and cheat

to the treasury? The abbot took away the bedeviled ink, and supplied another bottle, but from the saint's pen this dropped light like the other. Then all the brothers crossed themselves, and said a hundred *Paters*, and with bell, book and candle cursed the devil in the ink, and commanded him out. But still the letters beamed when the saint took the pen. Then they read 500 masses, poured all their stock of ink into the ash-heap, and supplied the saint with nothing but a bottle of holy water. But when the saint wrote with the water, the script flashed and shone as before. Then the holy brothers gave it up. And so St. Solifer continued to write his gentle counsels and simple discourses for the poor people. As the letters were not gold which the brothers could have put to use, but only of heavenly light, for which they had no occasion, they forbade not the giving of the shining writings to the poor folks whom St. Solifer loved. Therefore the beaming scripts were to be found in many a poor hut. What became of them? This question is asked by Lepidus. He says the report was that they continued to shine even after the death of the saint, so long as they were held by those who had known him; but when these died also, the letters of light turned black. This, says Lepidus, was as if it were

the saint that shone in his writing, and therefore the letters beamed only for those who knew the saint.

'Tis a strange story. If it have a twin in any folk lore, I have not met it; unless, perhaps, the fairy tales of good children and child-like persons from whose mouth a pearl or other precious thing dropped with every word, be like St. Solifer's sun-ink. Perhaps the story that Adam and Eve in Eden had garments made of light may be of a like class. I say again I wonder that no writer but this Lepidus has the tale—at least that I have found it not, after some pains. Yet 'tis too homely a thing for the freakish youth to have invented. I like to take these old tales with the simplicity of the people among whom they shoot. I mean that I abhor the making of philosophy out of them.

MOTIVE AND A STORY.

"This bank-note world," says the poet Halleck; and Seneca has a like miserable saying, "Take from men ambition and vanity, and you will have neither heroes nor patriots." Pah! A plague on such teaching, say I! May bats fly away with it, and vanish in night! What! Has a man grown old and been reputed wise in this world, and with no little means of wisdom, even to the surmise that he was acquainted with the Apostle Paul, as has been said of Seneca, and yet will he have it that ambition and vanity is the stuff of heroes and patriots? It is a question whether such babble came from a man after he had taken a look into his own heart or before. For, if after, the look into himself must have shown him poor matter; and if before, then why did he not correct himself afterward? Ambition and vanity the stuff of heroes forsooth! and the heart-fires of lovers of their country! A wiser than Seneca reckoned it impossible to serve God and mammon at once, and averred it contrary to nature to expect grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles. A burning ambi-

tion it was, no doubt, a very fire of ambition, which roasted a humble Christian martyr first, and made him thus insensible to a Roman roasting thereafter. Or a fine gnawing of vanity at the heart it was that so accustomed the Christians to tooth and fang that they made nothing of being thrown to the wild beasts in the arena! Folly! Noble men are not made of ignoble passions, nor high acts bred of mean motives. A "bank-note world" indeed! Emerson says: "Money, which represents the prose of life, and hardly is spoken of in parlors without an apology, is in its effects and laws as beautiful as roses." And George McDonald says, even better: "But for money and the need of it, there would be not half the friendship in the world. It is powerful for good if divinely used. Give it plenty of air, and it is as sweet as the hawthorn; shut it up, and it cankers and breeds worms"—as, we may add, the manna in the desert and any other heavenly thing.

To make a noble use of wealth in whatever form the wealth be, whether of matter or mind, but especially of material wealth, many things and capacities are needed; but the main thing necessary is purity of motive. I mean that the prime necessity for any noble act is the wish to do it. If there be in the mind a single eye

ior any noble devotion, then, as the Master has it, the whole body is full of light unto that purpose. But if the eye be not single, which is to say, if there be a mixture of motives, some noble and disinterested, but some also ignoble, self-seeking, calculating or shrewd, then the action springing from the motives will be lovely only in look, in color—that is, outwardly—but in substance unhandsome or decayed, punctured, eaten. This shows why so many noble works are done when the artist knows not that he is doing something very great, and is not looking for the work to come to fame and glory. For the single eye, which is the eye fixed on the object with no look askance to praise or gain by the production, is a strong light, a white beam, showing the object grandly, and giving illumination whereby to work. The musician, painter, or whatever artist, when many times he has endeavored well, leaps, when he knows it not, to his master-piece, by the light of the single eye.

There is an excellent story in the "Decameron" of Boccaccio, which is an admirable study in motive. The hero, Nathan by name, has gathered, by an industrious and enterprising life, enormous wealth, indeed quite unlimited. His dwelling-place being not far from a place where cross-roads met, frequented by many pilgrims and

travelers, Nathan, in his desire to make some good and charitable use of his kingly revenues, bethought him to build a vast manor house at the crossing of the roads. He purchased a great park hard by, and erected a mansion large enough to entertain all the pilgrims that by any expectation could be there at a time. The ample grounds he surrounded by a wall in which he placed fifty gates always standing open, with porters and gate-keepers present whose special duty it was to make everyone welcome and bring him to the mansion. When Nathan had completed his great design, he took a vow with himself that never in his own house would he refuse any request whatever to any sojourner therein, but that everyone entertained by him should have on the instant whatever he should ask for, let it be what it might. Of course the fame of such a royal entertainer spread rapidly and far. It was not long before Nathan had his house constantly full of pilgrims, coming, staying and going, so that his dwelling became a great hostelry for the entertainment of strangers. Nathan's fame rang through all the kingdom.

Now, there was one Mithridanes living in another part of the realm, who also was rich past all computing of his wealth, and he, as well as the humble travelers, heard of the fame of

Nathan, which was like a bell in a high place sounding in the ears of the lofty and lowly alike. It needed no great ringing of Nathan's fame in Mithridanes' ears to set him thinking how little fame he himself had with all his wealth. "What fame have I?" says Mithridanes; "yet, here is this Nathan, no richer than I, whose fame rings in the kingdom so that the King himself might envy. And what does he for all this praise and renown? What but open his house to a bevy of beggarly pilgrims who forthwith sing him wherever they go, and carry his name from Dan to Beersheba, while he takes his ease, and rides to glory on their necks? And why shall I not do the same?" quoth Mithridanes. Whereupon he pierced his high and forbidding wall in fifty places, and made fifty gates into his great park, after the manner of Nathan, over which he placed scrolls in letters of gold as Nathan had done, bidding all persons welcome and inviting them to enter. Notice here, if I may stop the story for a moral, as I have called the tale a study of motive—notice, I say, the great contrast between Nathan and Mithridanes. It goes all in one sentence, to wit: that Nathan opened his park for love of the pilgrims, and Mithridanes for love of himself; or, in other words, Nathan to follow out his own heart,

but Mithridanes to capture Nathan's glory. Mithridanes succeeded well in his ambition; that is, aiming at outward fame, he obtained it as well as Nathan, who aimed not at it. His fame rang all over the realm. He also was accounted a great lover of the weary and wayworn, and a benefactor of his kind. Very few penetrate to the motive, or take occasion to ask themselves the spring of actions that seem admirable and are so pleasant. A skeleton set forth in velvet and well draped with robes, and a good mask put on the skull, will be a pleasing sight, and seem very fine, because we have no occasion to lift the velvet, and the velvet is fine. So it was with Mithridanes; he was well dressed up. But mishaps will tear off more robes and pretensions than men can invent, just as a slight knock will topple the skeleton over, and show it to be but rattling ribs beneath the robes. Such an accident befell Mithridanes. There came an old woman among the wayfarers, who, entering at one gate and receiving an alms and going away, straightway came back by another gate, received another alms and departed, but forthwith presented herself again through a third gate; and so on, until thirteen times she had received the benefactions. Now, at this point Mithridanes' patience was exhausted, because he wished not purely to give for the

joy of giving, like Nathan, but so to give as to get fame by it; that is, not much to each one of a few, but little to each one of many who might spread his repute abroad. So, said Mithridanes, "Good woman, you go and come very often, and still you are served with alms." When the old woman heard these words, she exclaimed: "Oh, the liberality of Nathan! How honorable and wonderful is that! I have passed through two-and-thirty gates of his palace even such as are here, and at every one I received an alms without any knowledge taken of me either by him or by any of his followers; and here I have passed through but thirteen gates, and am acknowledged and note taken of me. Farewell to this house, for I never mean to visit it any more." When Mithridanes reflected on this speech, dark and gloomy became his mind. "Wretched man that I am!" exclaimed he; "when shall I attain to perform such wonders as Nathan does? In seeking to surpass him, I cannot come near him in the very slightest."

"What can money do to console a man with a headache?" says Macdonald. Yes, or with a heartache from envy, either. It needs a better salve than riches to cure the burning directly under the heart which comes with the passion of envy. Nay, riches not seldom set up the inflammation, for

often 'tis not the poor who envy the rich, but the rich who envy the richer. Young says: "Much learning shows how little mortals know; much wealth, how little worldlings can enjoy." Thus did Mithridanes' riches show only how little ease he could get out of them; by which he was so tossed and racked day and night that finally he made up his mind to kill Nathan, thus to be rid of his rival's fame, and of that so great light which made his own lamp look pale. Forthwith he set out, and coming to Nathan's place, and meeting Nathan, whom he had never seen, and mistaking him, in the simple garments which always he wore, for a meaner man, he asked of him if he knew where Nathan was. Nathan answered, cheerfully, "Truly, kind sir, there is no man in these parts that knows better how to show you Nathan than I do. Therefore be pleased to come with me, and I will bring you to him." "Do so," said Mithridanes; "but be sure you let me see Nathan without being seen by him." So, coming to the house, and Nathan having warned all his servants of the household that it should not be discovered to Mithridanes who Nathan was, he entertained his new guest so pleasantly and with such jollity of mirth that Mithridanes was quite won over to him. Nay, he reasoned that his entertainer, whom he thought some servant of Nathan, must

be mightily taken with him, and that therefore he might serve his ends by making a friend and confidant in Nathan's house to help him entrap and destroy the master of the mansion. To this conclusion, Nathan himself helped his guest; for when Mithridanes asked who he was, Nathan answered, shrewdly: "In truth, sir, I am one of the poorest servants of Nathan, and have been in his service since childhood, and grown old in it as you see me, and yet he has never bestowed any other advancement on me than as you see; in which respect let other men commend him if they will, but I will not." Encouraged by this, Mithridanes revealed to the unknown Nathan his plot to kill him, and asked his help to take himself off. Nathan then, quite unmoved, took his guest to a window, and showed him a small wood or thicket at some distance from the house, where he told him Nathan walked alone every morning, and could be easily killed in secret.

So Mithridanes went away with his purpose the more fixed, and Nathan went calmly to sleep. When he arose in the morning his heart altered not a jot from his counsel, and he went alone to the place appointed for his death. There Mithridanes leaped forth from his ambush, and fell on him, exclaiming, "Old man, thou must die!" To which Nathan answered quietly, "Well, if it be my

fate, no doubt I have deserved it." The voice and the quiet manner gave Mithridanes occasion to look hard at him, and then he knew him to be the same man who so had entertained him the night before. Overcome with shame, he fell at Nathan's feet. But Nathan raised him kindly from the ground, kissed his cheek, told him that it needed a man capable of great deeds to conceive such a work as he had planned, and otherwise comforted him generously. Mithridanes, all amazed, asked Nathan how he dared come to the appointed place, knowing his death was so plotted and contrived. Nathan answered him that he should not wonder at this; "for I," said he, "resolved long ago to deny no man anything that he should ask of me. As it was your fortune to come for my life, I resolved at once to give it to you, that you might not be the only man that ever left me without having what he asked. And it was little enough to give, my friend, for it has been long drawn out, and in the course of nature as it fares with other men, I must give it up soon, in whatever way it may happen. Therefore it seemed better to give it away if you wished to take it, than to let it slip from me in some way without honor to me. Take it, therefore, if you will, for no other one ever wanted it, and perhaps no other will; and the longer I keep

it the less it will be worth. Before it grows quite contemptible, take it, I pray you."

Here in this pleasing story we see the sincerity of Nathan brought to very clear light, showing the single eye with which he had done his great benefactions; just as the meaner motive of Mithridanes had been discovered easily by the pertinacity of the beggar woman. For when she asked an alms too much for his patience, he showed plainly that he gave anything to her only for the fame and praise of it; but when Mithridanes asked everything of Nathan, even to his life, Nathan gave it because of his singleness of purpose that no man should depart from him unsatisfied, against which he reckoned his life not a jot. No fame could come to him by his secluded taking off in a lonely thicket, none knowing that thus he gave his life freely, and appointed the time of his own death. So the story well may be reasoned to teach to what bounds, or rather how past all bounds, a sincere purpose will carry a man. But this is shown even more eloquently in the conclusion of the story. "Listen to me," said Nathan; "I am old and spent, you are young, and have yet strength and time to do great good. I have had my honors and enjoyed them; you have yet long time in which to enjoy. Therefore, lusty and young as now you are, you shall dwell

here in my house, and be called by the name of Nathan. Spent with years, as you see I am, I will live in your house and be called by the name Mithridanes. So both the name and the place shall give you the glory which you wish, and I shall live content, with no thought of envy." "Dear father," answered Mithridanes, "you have given me greater riches than even that would be, for you have enabled me to go back to my own house, as now I will go, and live contented with my own condition." "Man," says Carlyle, "it is not thy works, which are mortal, infinitely little, and the greatest no greater than the least, but only the spirit that thou workest in, that can have worth or continuance."

YIMA.

Leigh Hunt's poem, "Abou Ben Adhem," has gone all over the world. It has become common knowledge everywhere that, though the angel would not write Ben Adhem down as one who loved the Lord, yet afterwards his name was found the first in the list because he loved his fellow-men. This is a thought which has great part in religion. In some form, it is in all scriptures. I never read any scriptures, whether Christian or any other (and I have found much food to be gathered in the scriptures of all religions), without falling on this thought in them, that it is the lover of men, whether he be a Samaritan or however despised or outcast, who loves the Maker of men. In the Zend-Avesta, this thought is put in a legend, quaintly, beautifully, tenderly—the story of Yima. It is told in the second Fargard of the *Vendidad.*

Yima was a shepherd, very ancient,—indeed, among the first of men when the earth was but little peopled, as the story is. He was beautiful in look, of noble stature, and yet sup-

ple and delicate; of bright countenance and shining hair, and eyes like the deep-sea blue. Ahura Mazda—that is to say, theLord-all-knowing—looking down from heaven, beheld the beauty of the shepherd, and resolved to send him forth to be a preacher and minister of the divine law. Whereupon he called to the shepherd out of the sky, and said: "Fair Yima, I call you and send you forth to be a preacher and bearer of my law." This seemed a very heavy weight to Yima. By no means could he take on him to be a preacher. It was a terrible and holy office; and to bear the law seemed to him like lifting up a mountain. Therefore he cast himself on his face and cried: "O Ahura Mazda, lay not this upon me: I was not born, I was not taught, to be a preacher and bearer of thy law."

Now at this point in the story we hear the human heart speak when it is left to itself and to nature. There are many religious sects (and Christianity in some of its creeds is one of them) which would make Ahura Mazda full of wrath at this answer of the shepherd; nay, it would be taught that no guilt could be greater than to lack the faith to proclaim the Lord and his law. But in some old scriptures, as in this story, there was a different and better thought; for then men spoke straight out of the heart. Indeed, they

sang their religion, and singing is given to blithe and simple thoughts.

When Yima had answered what in effect was to say that he dared not claim the love of the Lord, just as the angel denied it to Ben Adhem, the like result came as in the poem; that is, the love of men then was put forth for Yima to lay hold of. Ahura Mazda answered: "Since thou wishest not to be the preacher and the bearer of my law, then go thou and make my worlds thrive, make my worlds increase; undertake thou to nourish, to rule, and to watch over my world." This found an echo in the shepherd's heart. The fair Yima replied: "Yea, I will make thy worlds thrive, I will make thy worlds increase; yea, I will nourish and watch over thy world. While I do live, there shall be neither cold wind nor hot wind, neither disease nor death."

Then Ahura Mazda reached down from heaven and gave Yima "two implements, a golden ring and a poniard inlaid with gold," and proclaimed, "Yima bears the royal sway." Thus, under the reign of the shepherd, three hundred winters passed in which there were no cold winds, and three hundred summers with never a hot wind, such care did he take of the earth; and there was great thrift and increase. The earth "was

replenished with flocks and herds," says the old record; "with men and dogs and birds and with red-blazing fires." Indeed, so did they all grow and multiply that soon there was no room left, and Yima bethought him what he could do; for the stretch of his love was not yet satisfied. He wished more "flocks and herds and men and dogs and birds and red-blazing fires," because of their blithe happiness and joyful sports which delighted him on every hand. Then he "stepped forward toward the luminous space southward to meet the sun"—a long journey; but he who would get strength must go to the source of it. Between the earth and the realm of perfect and infinite light there lay three regions, each having a light of its own. The first, nearest to the earth, was the star region. When Yima reached this place, the habitation of the starlight, he walked on a floor all covered with pebbles. Each pebble was bright and twinkling, and rays shot from every one that wove themselves together in the air into a shining lace which opened and closed as Yima passed through it. From this he ascended to the moon realm, the next one to the star region. There Yima walked on a floor that was like one broad sheet of silver; and the beam of it filled the atmosphere in every part, so that it was not like shining lace threads, but was an

atmosphere of light itself, a sheeny radiance. Passing through the moon region, Yima ascended to the sun region, farthest from the earth. Here he found no floor at all, but a golden sea without end or beginning,—floods of golden light rolling in billows that lapped one on another; and vapors rose from it that made the air as glowing as the sea. Into this ocean Yima plunged, and bathed himself in the heat of the sun till he had grown very strong.

Then he applied himself to the use of the golden ring and the gold-inlaid poniard which Ahura Mazda had given him. It is true the ancient *Vendidad* is silent on this point, except that Yima now used the ring and the poniard on the earth when he came back from his journey to the luminous space of the sun. But in another writer, the latest Egomet, is told the manner in which Yima used the ring and poniard. Egomet the youngest, it is true, is an Occidental writer, but the first of the name was Oriental, and older far even than the *Vendidad.* Indeed, they of that name are so old that no one has attempted to fix their dates with certainty. They go back to the very dawn of language, and are sources of the oldest human legends. I find in this Egomet that, when Yima had grown strong by bathing in the luminous space of the sun, he

fastened his golden ring to the earth by means of his gold-inlaid poniard, which he drove into the heart of a granite hill. Then he seized the beams of the sun, and bent them as nothing else ever had had strength to do, except the mighty air and the vast sea. Nay, not only did he bend them, but he passed them through his gold ring, and bent them back on themselves, and knotted and tied them together, so that then the earth was fixed firmly and held by the beams of the sun. Then Yima went quickly to the other side of the earth, and, seizing a mighty oak tree which grew there with roots that reached to the earth's center, and bracing himself, pulled with all his strength to stretch out the earth, speaking thus, as he pulled: "O Earth and spirit of the earth, kindly open asunder and stretch thyself afar to bear flocks and herds and men." By this means, Yima made the earth grow larger by one-third than it was before; and "there came flocks and herds and men at his will and wish, as many as he wished." After another three hundred years the earth was again too full, and Yima did as before, and stretched it another third; and again after three hundred years, the same thing happened, and he stretched the earth another third, so that then the earth was twice as large as at first. And, after every stretching,

there came upon it new rejoicing and thrift and increase, with "flocks and herds, with men and dogs and birds and with red-blazing fires."

If I mistake not, the meaning of this old tale from the *Vendidad* is that whoever loves the earth according to the nature of the earth, loves the Maker of the earth according to the nature of the Maker of such an earth; and whoever loves flocks and herds and all creatures according to their nature, loves the Maker of them according to the nature of the Maker of such creatures; and whoever loves men according to the nature of men, loves the Maker of men according to the nature of such a Maker.

SPRINKLING THE THERMOMETER.

I have met two instances of persuading the thermometer: one by icing it in winter, the other by watering it in summer. Some urchins at school, in very cold weather, when it was not possible to bring the school-room to a safe temperature, were told by the teacher to put on their overcoats. Also he advised them that if it grew any colder he should send them home, and thereupon went out of the room to consult with the principal of the school. Now did the urchins rise ingeniously to a level with the emergency; for forthwith they opened the window, procured an icicle, and held it to the bulb of the thermometer. When the teacher returned, shortly, he looked at the mercury, started, rubbed his glasses, looked again, decided that it had fallen six degrees, and dismissed the victorious rogues at once. The other instance—I mean the watering of the thermometer in summer—was the deed of a friend of mine on a very hot day. Consulting the mercury in a shaded place, he found it registering ninety degrees. Whereupon,

procuring the garden hose, he thoroughly sprinkled the thermometer, declaring he would not endure it so high.

Now, there is much likeness in the two cases. I make no doubt my friend comforted himself fully as well as the roguish urchins attained their object; for it is surprising what a part fictions play in our life, and how much comfort we may get from conditions or circumstances which the while we know well enough that we have invented, and that they are but figments of our fancy or progeny of our heart's desire. I knew an excellent old gentleman, of a contented mind, who lived wholly by the thermometer; for his feelings—I mean of the flesh, creepings of cold or flushes of heat—came and went wholly as the thermometer advised his eyes that they ought—so much so that it was noted more than once that when the thermometer hung in a beam of heat from the sun or the fire or a lamp, and the room was cold, and the old gentleman was chilly and went to the thermometer to advise with it as to whether he ought to be cold or not, instantly he was content and warm upon observing the height of the mercury. This brings to thought, by the way, a practical hint which I have found worth much—namely, that with the thermometer, as with many other things in life, it is not the abso-

lute point of it, but the contrast, comparison, or relative situation which is important; I mean, more plainly, that what is to be thought of is not the height of the mercury now, but where it stands in contrast with its point some minutes back. For if a man be in a very warm room and the thermometer falling, he will begin to have chill creepings, whatever the temperature; but if the room be quite cold and the mercury going up, by which I mean the heat rising, he will be warm; for it is the contrast and the motion the right way which the body feels, more than the absolute temperature. This I have observed very often, and some persons quickly feel a change even of a degree or two up or down.

But, to return to the sprinkling of the thermometer, by way of triumphing over the sun, it is noteworthy, as I have said, what a part fictions play in our life for good or ill. Now, we shall have plenty of them by nature, for the good part, so that we need not nurse them; and plenty of them also by nature for the ill part, and it is well to beware of these. Whatever we want to do exceedingly we never lack reasons for doing; which reasons we invent with a speed and ingenuity that would reveal every man a great inventor if we could see into his heart when it is set on something. And what we wish not to do, never

can we find any reasons for that, though they be as thick as blackberries in their coverts; for straightway we fancy them all away, as easily as we charm off a child's fright with legends of good fairies. One species of persons under this rule is speculators; for if they do but see the glimmer of a chance to quadruple some money, they become as blind as moles, by reason of the fictions in which their eyes excel, to the strong lights of the chances against them. Another species is lovers. For they so bedeck, spangle, and becloud each other with rosy fictions that no one of them will take any warning in time, how plain soever; whence it happens so often that one need not play on words to say that they come to bemoan their fancy at leisure. Between lovers the worst fiction is—and being also the most common, much woe is bred of it—that, however either one behaves to others, naught but goodness and grace will be given to the other one lover. It is passing strange that this fiction has so much hold on the world, for one has but to open his eyes anywhere to see what a glozing invention it is. Yet lovers persist in it, and go on wheedling themselves with a figment of a special constitution or stomach in themselves which can turn to food what to others is poison. And this they do till they are mortally sick; for we are

all alike, and what kills one kills all. What wounds a sister or a brother will stab a wife or a husband, and whoever gives the blow of the one wound will give the thrust of the other. This is a sure fact, and I say that the fiction contrariwise is the worst of love's many fictions.

Lovers and speculators make vast ruins of themselves and their fortunes by reason of their fictions, because they risk everything, or at least such immense values that when the fictions crumble the fall is like Lucifer's, or as the mighty language of Isaiah has given an image of it:

> Therefore doth the underworld enlarge its greedy throat,
> And stretch open its mouth without measure,
> And down go the realm's nobility and her wealth,
> And busy throngs, and all that was joyful within her.

Faulty persons do the most inventing, and are full of fictions, because they ascribe their failures to everything in the world but their faults, which is a sorry sprinkling of the thermometer, and they none the less in a dreadful heat of roasting defects, twists, and taints in themselves. A kind or species under this rule, very noticeable, is the vain person. Now, there are two kinds of vanity—namely, of what one does and what one is. The first is not so hurtful, for it

cuts off no effort, but rather urges it. The second vanity always is full of fictions of what the man could do if only he would; and the worst of it is that not only therefore is he content with doing nothing, but very discontent with all the world that they worship not what he might do. I have read of a famous singer who, being warned of some faults by a critic, fell into a great rage and called the man every kind of ill names, winding up with declaring him an impious fellow; "for," said she, "such a talent as mine comes only by grace of the Creator, and not to admire it is to fly in the face of heaven." But how was it that she thought not of impiety when she labored not with her talent and added not her own will to the gift of God to unfold it? Yet this is a common way, and very marked in the persons I am speaking of. They douche the thermometer into a cool fiction that the world owes them a great honor for being so fine or so mighty, whereupon they seem to feel not the blaze of the sun in which their inertness roasts before other eyes.

In brief, this is the lesson which comes of my friend's pleasant bathing of the thermometer, to wit, that there is no one in the world one may deceive so easily as himself.

A STORY FROM MEULEVILLE.

Meuleville's *Maestitia Incisa*, in old French, has fallen out of sight, save to the curious. Yet there is a new issue of it recently—for with the curious it holds a high place for its language and for its strange and quaint matter. It is, indeed, a work of many whimseys, yet it has much learning in its way, mingled with no little poetry. A critic of much credit in his day, a hundred years ago, Jacquesfils by name, said it was the only book that ever drew him out of bed early in the morning to read it. Meuleville was born, according to the tradition (though we have but slender account of him) at Lindley, in Leicestershire, England. But his parents removed, when he was but a child, to France. It is not told how this happened, or why, or precisely when, and it is a strange thing, or unusual at least; for in those days, namely, the middle of the sixteenth century, men moved about but little, commonly dying where they were born. However, to France went the parents of Meuleville, and settled near what is now the town of

Alby, in Languedoc. This is every whit all that is known of his parents; yet it is much to be said of them that Robert Meuleville was their son. He lived always where his parents settled, never traveling, if tradition may be taken; very studious. He was learned enough to have known beyond doubt the work of the great Pleiade, the seven who at that time began the modern French by turning into its service the whole Latin vocabulary. But Meuleville kept to the older, middle-aged form, mayhap because he took only the light themes, fancies, and pictures which the old French could handle withal, since they required only simple words and a small stock of them. However, keep to the old he did, and for this he was much loved by the peasants of his neighborhood, the country-folk near him; yes, and many also far away, for his books traveled widely. Yet he took a Latin title for his most ambitious work, which above I have given, the "Maestitia Incisa," or "Melancholy Dissected," wherein the griefs, troubles, doubts, suspenses, qualms, and misgivings of men are treated with many a pretty quirk, light fancy, jaunty raillery, and pleasant story. The work has this trait of its own in the form of it—namely, that it is written both in prose and verse, according to a view of the author (so I

take it) like Poe's dictum, that a long poem is impossible, and all attempts thereat are but short poems linked into a chain by some metrical prose. Now, Meuleville thought the prose no better for the meter, and thereupon hung his poems on a string not so like to be confounded with the pearls themselves. I know of no like work in this point, except that playwrights oft have done so in their dramas, but in no lyrical piece; and I have read that a work of Boccaccio follows the same manner, but I have not seen it, and know not whether it be like Meuleville's. For the old French writer has strung his verse and prose along together, not in great masses of either, unless rarely and for some special convenience, but in short bits as the matter seemed to hint, whether poetical or prosaic, a fancy, a figure, a warm thought, or a statement, a reason, a common bit of narrative or the like. But my reader shall judge for himself of the manner by what follows, which is one of Meuleville's pleasant stories. The actors are Jean, a dull clown, and a donkey; and the moon plays no small part, though a silent one. I have met an elder source of the story in an ancient writer, from whom I think Meuleville borrowed it like a student, but thereupon wrote it all over like a poet, till it was little like its elder form. I will render

freely from the old French, and the verse I will render in verse; but 'tis impossible to take the same meters. For these I must choose such rhythms as will give a like effect, or the most like, in English.

There was a good, sober fellow named Jean, an honest yokel, not troubled with wit. But he could heave an ax well; and he would have been a comrade for the seven wise men if his head had held as much as it promised by the size of it. But he was so big of body in every way that a little noddle on him would have made him look like a lion with a cat's head. Now, as a big head must be stuffed with something, Jean's was crammed well with dullness, which for stuffing is every whit as good as sense, if there be enough of it; for, as most men stay where they are, do what they are bid, and follow their neighbors, most heads are like cushions, useful for other heads to lie on, and all equal whatever they be stuffed with, since the stuffing is out of sight. Now, this honest fellow had a sociable servant well-conditioned for him, to-wit, his donkey. Jean's work was to cut wood in the forest and make fagots, which then he loaded on the other one—the donkey—who then bore the load bravely to the town, where Jean bartered his stock. Jean used to tether the donkey in a field while

he worked in the wood. One day the honest fellow worked harder and later than was his wont, and indeed till he could see no longer; and as he had gone far into the wood and must make some journeys to the field before he could bring out enough fagots in his arms wherewith to load the donkey, the night drew down darkly before he came out the last time. Darkness let fall spots all over the open field, and in plenty where the forest, too, dropped shades.

Then Evening came, the maid,
And swept the bits of darkness under the trees,
As the bits on earth were laid
Broken from off the twilight by the breeze.

And as the twilight grew,
Widened and darkened, and overlapped the West,
The breeze had less ado
To break off larger pieces from the rest.

And still the Eve, the maid,
Swept the thickening fragments under the trees;
The field, the more 'twas laid
With splints of darkness, her the more did please.

Until she piled them so
Around the trunks, the branches then did seem
Like swimmers' heads chinned low,
And crowded in a fearful Lethean stream.

Gone were the stems that stood;
The tops afloat, each anchored to his tree;
And under them the wood
Was like a black, unbanked and standing sea.

Into this dead darkness came forth Jean with

his last load of fagots, and soon the good donkey was laden well, and then kind nature smiled upon their way. There came a faint light through the tree-tops, sifted, and falling fleck by fleck, like a frolic hide-away peeping through a lattice, and soon lifting his head over it to see the better. So the moon came over the tops.

'Twas like a playmate of the night,
An infantile and coy delight,
A roguish, sly, fantastic sprite,
That made up sports and wiles and tricks
Of branches, leaves and vines and sticks,
And ran and played his bonny hours
Of hide-and seek through tossing bowers,
And called and laughed, and teased the night
That fain would frown, but must be bright.

Now, Jean and the donkey, being ready, went along over the field merrily, well lighted by the moon, and shortly came to a pool wherein the moon was reflected. The donkey, being athirst, refreshed himself at the pool, and took so long a pull at the shallow bowl that in truth he drank it all up. Just then came a cloud over the moon and shut her out. The mist-children had come and played their tricksy wiles. In a twinkling the little imps had spun clouds enough to make a midnight.

Up from the earth they leaped,
Salt from the ocean steeped,
Fresh from the hilly brink

Where brooks shoot out and sink,
And from the basined lake
In which brooks rush and break—
They flew, the brood of the mist,
And cried each other "Hist!
We'll do work fell and whist!
Let mortal boobies scramble
Who best shall peak and ramble;
We'll try who laughs anon,
When we have wrought, and heaped a cloud, and gone!"
So, than to tell more quick,
They spin a vapor thick,
And straight the moon looks sick;
And thick they spin and thicker,
And straight the moon looks sicker;
Then pile a bank to hide,
And straight the moon hath died;
And instant shadow drear
Frightens the earth which erst was gilt with cheer.

Now befell a terrible thing in the honest fellow's fancy; for when the donkey had emptied the pool in which the moon shone by reflection, and the moon was hid in the sky where it had shone, Jean thought, with horror, that his beast had swallowed the moon. At this he fell into a dreadful fright, thinking what the earth could do all the black nights, and how his neighbors would berate him. Whereupon, as commonly he that fears a beating falls to beating some other one, so Jean fell on his donkey with blows and upbraidings. Then he seized him around the

girth and squeezed with all his mighty strength to make him heave up the moon, if might be. When this served not, he bethought him of another way, for have the moon again he would. Now, the donkey was not only excellent in the length of his ears, but uncommon also as to his tail. This flexible part of the patient creature, who by no means could understand these strange antics, Jean tied and knotted well round a sapling. Then, bracing himself at the donkey's head and seizing his long ears, he pulled with might and main. The beast protested, and besought his master, with as much of a bray as he could utter in that posture, not being able to stretch out his nose after the needful fashion of a bray. This, Jean thought, was because the creature was choked with the moon in his throat, and pulled harder than ever. As the bray came to naught with his master, and the good beast had borne past the virtue of patience, suddenly he threw up his nose with a vast force, and catching Jean under the chin, sent him heels over head onto the turf. At this instant forth came the moon from the cloud. What the mist-chil dren had piled the air cleared off.

> Awoke the Jovian atmosphere,
> Olympian Titan, and drank up the cloud;
> That instantly the mooned sphere,

Undraped, shot out in space without a shroud;
'Twas like a meteor hurled ablaze from night,
To stand when it came near the earth and stay alight.

When Jean picked himself up and beheld the moon in the heavens, he was well pleased with his success, yet no little angry with the conclusion of it. "Ye bad beast," he cried to his donkey; "I knew I would have it out of ye, but I thought not it would come with such a bounce. An ever ye drink it again, I will flay ye."

Here Meuleville launches into many pleasant and artful moralizings, in which I will not follow him, except to quote one remark. He says that if every darkness that befalls anywhere on the earth could be cured by pulling the ears of some ass who has caused it, good people would fare better, and things go well that now go ill.

THE TRIPLING OF THE MUSES.

At first there were but three Muses. It is a story that I love to dwell on—how they, the three, became nine. The names of the three in the beginning were Meditation, Memory, and Song. The three names carry much in them, and are to be taken in this order, as I have given them; for in this order of steps does the mind unfold, and in this order thereupon the Muses came of the human mind: First, Meditation, for we must take note of the things about us and dwell on them in mind, and meditate, if we are to grow into knowledge of these things or into likeness to a mind that has scope for knowledge. There are creatures whose whole experience, it must be thought, is only the passing of sensations, without that pause of any of them which is meditation.

The second Muse is Memory. When we have meditated, what avail of it, if the thing and the meditation of it both fly away and are gone? Nay, how meditate unless from beat to beat of the mind we can keep the rhythm of thought, and

know in the next moment what we have meditated in this? Therefore Memory not so much follows meditation as is one with it, and these two Muses must be twins of one birth. Yet is Memory to serve Meditation and collect its droppings as the good husbandman the fallen fruit of a ripe tree. And truly Memory is what is one's self. Memory is that string on which the pearls of Meditation hang. This thought or that is a bit of the action of myself, but Memory is the knowledge of myself. Milton has it that "One with honest meditation fed has into himself descended"—which truly is so when the meditations stay together in Memory, or if these two be twin-born. Now, when thus Meditation has ripened and Memory has garnered it, then comes Song, the last of the three Muses, and the most gracious; for the others may frown or be stern of face, but Song never, because it is the fit and appointed end of the others, and thus must be fair and joyful. "Poetry is thought in blossom" —'tis a good saying, though I remember not whose; and flowers most do thrive in the tops of plants. It has no little meaning and much good cheer for the heart that the last of the Muses was Song. This signifies that when we have meditated and remembered, we must sing perforce, for only joy can come of thinking and gar-

nering. It is but another form of Emerson's saying, that "The finest poetry was first experience;" for this is so strong a truth that it is true likewise if we turn it about, like to the vitality of some simple creatures who live just as well if they be turned inside out. For if "The finest poetry was first experience," 'tis because experience of nature always will run into song. These three there must be, as the old myth says. Meditation and Memory make experience, and then comes a swift burst of Song, like a brother who is but a year younger, so quickly Mother Nature bears this child after the others.

Then the three Muses multiplied to nine, and the story of this tripling I call a very fine one, full of light and heart. A sculptor was ordered to make three statues of the three Muses, for a temple of Apollo, because thinking and remembering and singing thrive in the sunlight and are joyful; and the steeds of the sun made no little rhythmical music themselves with their prancing and neighing, and Apollo himself handled the lyre. Therefore he must have the Muses in his temple, and, as I have said, a sculptor of good fame was set to work on them, and ordered to make three statues of them. But—Oh, heavenly error! Ah, blessed fate! Delight and glory of all following ages!—the sculptor mistook his

mission so blissfully that he magnified it threefold. Being required to make three statues of the three Muses, he conceived that he was directed to make three statues of each one of them. 'Tis well for us that he was a dauntless man, for he set to work at this vast task with no faint grace, and with neither a surprise nor an outcry, which soon would have brought the error to light. And surely so brave a soul seldom has lived.

So far the story is in Varro, whom I have followed. But here this "most learned of the Romans," he of the 500 books, has lost a main part of the tale, which I find in a source not so notable, and mayhap more fanciful than historical or traditional. Yet I will not refuse the story, but take it, because of a fine saying of the sculptor given in it—a saying so admirable and glorious, to my thinking, that I wonder so noble an answer could be handed down without the name of the brave artist; but so it is.

To go on: the sculptor was to have three years in which to finish his three statues, one year for each figure of a Muse. When the triple period was ended and the sculptor gave no sign, the people grumbled, but did no more than wonder and complain for another three years. When the sixth year was ended they opened their mouths more loudly and wagged their heads, talked of

the decrees of the people, muttered threatening words, and stirred each other up. And so they did for three years more, every twelvemonth growing more full of gall against the sculptor. When the whole nine years had flown, three times the grant of time, the wrath of the people waxed to the striking point, and they came together like a storm and raged around the sculptor's place, and called to each other that he was an idler and cut-purse of the people's time and money, and raised a shout, "Where are your results for nine years? You are a laggard. Show us your results," and were about to break in on him and rend his work-room. The sculptor came forth to the spleeny crowd and looked proudly on them and said: "You ask for my results. I myself am my result," and withdrew. This is the answer which I said I would not spare from the story, though I have it not from Varro, but from a collector whose name is naught—a picker-up of old rags in literature, who, like a junk seeker in our streets, must light on something fine now and then, because he bags everything. But what higher and nobler than the sculptor's answer to the vixenish men? Whether they were confounded, or the artist's words beat a grain of shame into their blessed wooden heads (for no doubt they were very honest rioters, and thought

in their irreverent ignorance that much time and money were going astray), they left their raving, and were cured of it so well that they tossed their manes no more while the sculptor, who had taken three times three years, was taking three times the nine. For so he did. Five triplets of years passed, and he gave no sign. Then passed the ninth triplet, and the twenty-seventh year was ended. Then the sculptor set his nine statues, in three groups of three, in Apollo's fane, and called the people. First they were taken to one group in a noble corner of the temple. "A lovely and majestic triad of sisters like to these never was seen," they cried. They shouted that in very truth the Muses were gods. Well did Homer call them "dwellers in the mansion of Olympus," and "gods that are at hand and know all things," while we mortals have no more than "a rumor and know not anything." When the people had admired their fill and worshiped, they were led a little way to another arched place, and the second three were unveiled. Now, indeed, they were quelled! Now were their cries hushed! Were there six Muses then? Had they adored but in half all their lives? Yea, 'twas so. Were not the gods before their eyes? Did not the images of the Pierian maids breathe before them? The streams of Pindus cast sunbeams

no more on three daughters, but on twice three. The great news was noised through the city and beyond, and then streamed a concourse like to the hurrying forth of the Greeks in Homer—

> As musterings of honey bees come forth, thronging,
> From a scooped rock, fresh bevies ever streaming on,
> And fly, thronging in clusters on the flowers of spring,
> And swarming thick, take wing, some this side and some that,
> Even so the many hosts, from out the ships and huts
> Before the deep-basined shore, came marching forth in ranks,
> Vast companies, to the assembly.

They filled the temple with a silent-murmuring throng, worshiping the twice-three Maids of the Sun; and their hearts were twice joyful. Then was opened to them the remaining group; and now there were thrice three! All the people bowed themselves and found voice for one mighty cry, then a silence. Ever after that time the Muses are nine.

This story, as I have said, is "a dish which I do love to feed upon." I take happily to the thoughts. The first of these thoughts, which the story holds in it, is that the power of God is human worship drawn to him. It was the worship of the people that three-folded the Muses into nine and thrice extended them over the earth, "All the power of God," as says Seneca, "is to do good." But when wonderfully (for how this is done is past thought, and how the first drawing

comes to pass is the mystery of mysteries)—when wonderfully, I say, men are drawn to worship, then all the good is done. For there is no good to compare to worship, and nothing beyond it. A man's worship is the access of God to the world. Wherefore a worshiper is "strong with the power of the Almighty," as Milton says of Truth. I have heard one say, "Are we not as necessary to God as he is to us?" A brave thought! A lifting, winged thought! Yet how to be reasoned or followed, who can see? We must be quiet with it. But this is sure, that the going forth of worship is the coming in of God.

Another thought like to the foregoing one is that Providence works with human hands. For a heart full of worship hath hands full of service. Where were the nine Muses but for the sculptor? And where the cunning of his hand to make them but for the love of his heart for them when they were but three? Here come I back to his grand saying, "I myself am my result." Truly, could there be a baser ignorance or meaner yokel-cry than this churl-howl for results? The artist had in hand to love the Muses and beseech them and dream of them till there was fire in him to soften stones into the shapes of them. And what if he were "straitened till it was accomplished,"

and what if the loving and beseeching and dreaming were long? The sculptor's answer, though haughty to the leering and whooping crowd, was humble and religious toward the heavens; as if he said: "Results are with Providence; and I am of Providence; wherefore I work but as I can, yet I work to the full." The same, says Walt Whitman in other words, and yet like, in his "Song of the Open Road." Having gotten out into the "long brown path before him," into "the open air to eat and sleep with the earth," he cries: "Henceforth I ask not good fortune; I myself am good fortune." These sayings are all one. And I have been used to think that another is like to them, the words of the Nazarene to the woman at Sychar: "I that speak unto thee am he." For whoever works as he can is the Providence of God, I to thee, and thou to me, and each one to the whole. "*O altitudo!*"

The story, again, has this thought in it: that Providence, though its hands are human hands, yet works itself out by us when our eyes are on the object simply, and we are about the task and thinking of naught else. If a man go about to be providential he will not be so, for then he is but a man strutting. When he is minding the work brought to his hands to be done, then he is Divinity busy in human shape. If the sculptor

had said to himself that now he would make nine Muses and multiply the gods, he would not have come to it—no, never. But, as he set forth to make but the three, as he thought himself told, and worked at that purely, and without stint of time or labor, behold! Providence extended itself by him, and forever after there were nine. Therefore, if a man work with devotion, let him know that his work is divine. And let him not be surprised and abashed if the result seem small, yea, and men mock at it; for he cannot see the result, nor the ends of it. And let him not be surprised, nor vaunt himself therewith, if the results tower like hills and roar like winds and rise like the sea, for Divinity may become any grand thing in a moment.

This is the sure thing, the everlasting truth, like breezes and stars for hoary eldership every day and fresh youth at night, that he who does his work steadfastly blesses all the people. And what could all Olympus do more than bless all people? I have read in the Shah Nameh a good legend to this same purpose, the story of the discovery of fire; for this happened, like many a great thing, when it was not thought of, but another thing was followed bravely with duty. Husheng, a very ancient king in Persia, fought with a dragon, and when the monster had gotten

himself into a cave, Husheng hurled a huge stone at him. This with a great force struck on a bulging ledge and sparks flew. These caught in the dry stubble, and soon all the plain was afire from them. So a stone which fell short of its aim struck out hearths and fires and cooking; but this was because it was hurled bravely at a griffin, and such an aim came never to naught, though it missed the monster. Nay, it may do a work much greater than to kill one gorgon or kraken.

This thought, that divine work hangs on human, and even that form of it which first I spoke of, that man's worship is the power and inlet of God, runs through the scriptures of the Zend-Avesta and lifts them very high. Some even are ready to say that the Mazdean has the glory to be the first who had these thoughts, or at least to speak of them. But however this, it is sure that the Zend scriptures are full of them, and fly like an eagle by reason of such wings. The story of Tishtrya is molded on this one theme of worship. Tishtrya is a star, but his most worshipful name is "Waterfaced," because he it is who causes the sky-ocean to overflow, thus to fall in showers over the "seven regions of the earth," watering the soil. This Tishtrya does by going into the sea in the shape of a glorious white horse with golden ears, and swelling the waters till they run

over the bowl of the shore. But this he does not easily; for when he has come from his great palace afar in the sky to the edge of the sea, and has taken the shape of the white horse with golden ears, and stepped into the waters, he meets a fierce demon in the sea in the shape of a black horse. The white and the black then fall on each other and fight for three days. But Tishtrya is overcome. Then he leaps from the waters, crying aloud, "I am lost; the waters are lost; the trees are lost; the Mazdean religion is broken to pieces. This is because men worship me not as they worship other angels. If men would come worship me I should gain the strength of ten horses, ten camels, ten oxen, ten navigable rivers." Then come human beings in troops from all quarters of the earth, hastening to the worship of Tishtrya. For the rain is staid, the springs fail, the soil is parched, the grain is dead, famine stalks, the children die, the aged moan, the middle-aged faint. All the people bend themselves and fall in the dust and pray to Tishtrya, the "Waterfaced," and call on him with worship. Then he grows strong again. The white horse with golden ears again goes down into the sea and fights with the black horse and overthrows him. He shouts his victory abroad, and this is the murmur of the coming rain. For

then the waters swell and brim and now pour over, and down come the showers, and the thirst of the earth is slaked.

This may seem a long wandering from the Tripling of the Muses—but not so; for I am away but three short paths of thought, quickly followed back. The sculptor did well who made the Muses nine; and it were not a bad thing if they were nine times nine. There is a saying, if I have it aright, of Sidney Smith, that he dreamed there were nine Articles and thirty-nine Muses, and since his dream his head had been confused about it. But my head is straight and clear to this point—better the Muses than the Articles. Carlyle has the saying, "Let the devil fly away with fine arts." But this is topsy-turvey. It is fine arts that fly away with the devil.

A DYING SPEECH.

It is well when a poem and a story of life match; for what fairer wedding than between the real and the ideal? I have such a case to offer. The poem is in some lines of Schefer, which here follow:

Smile to think
How pleasant it will be above thy grave,
How full all things will be of life and joy,
To grace thee too with monumental pomp,
With such a silver-bright celestial lamp,
That thou mayest not so miserably lie
Cast out from God, in darkness buried there.
This house of heaven is the fair home of all,
Mysterious heritage from sire to son!
This house of heaven is to all dead the fair,
The infinitely venerable tomb!
In parting, to imagine all the bliss
All beings in all days of coming time
Shall yet enjoy in this great heavenly house,
To feel it thousand-fold within thy heart
Through which it thrilled and flamed, and glows e'en now,
So that thine eyes still trickle down with tears,
As flowers that drip with drops from the spent clouds—
Clearly to feel at parting all this joy,
Is the beginning of eternal bliss!

Another gives a story of life, as I have said, matching with this poem; but that the tale is

true in fact, and happened in the manner told, I cannot say; but what matters it? Here follows it in substance: A man lay dying. Suddenly he broke into a kind of eloquence or rapture of speech. This, if I have read aright in divers authors, is no very uncommon or strange thing with the dying; nay, sometimes, if I may trust the poets and story-tellers—and, mayhap, too, instances of life—a notable eloquence, insight, and poetry of discourse seem to seize on the soul by a kind of prescience of freedom, when there is no sickness and the body is in full health, yet is on the edge of the pit of an accident in which soon it is to fall over. I mean plainly that some hours before a sudden, violent death, in no wise forecast or risked with knowledge, a man will show a notable, quiet eloquence not heard from him before. But, however this be, when death be visibly close at hand, it is said often to bring this endowment. Thus the dying man, as before I have said, broke forth into speech, first closing his eyes, as often one does in reflection. "I see," he said, "a glorious vision. In the distance I behold a high mountain rising slowly from a plain. It is like a slanted garden or vineyard slope, being embowered a long way up with waving trees, and again, after that, with dark, erect cedars or other sentinel-like trees. And still beyond

I see a green carpet nearly to the top, and beyond this a white peak piercing the blue of the sky. I see that the 'heaven-kissing hill' is full of dews and springs, and by and by they meet in a green basin, which then has a silver headway down the mountain, and forthwith a river issues into the plain and flows through it. The mountain is noble, but the plain more glorious still for beauty, so filled it is with a thousand colors of soils, and woods, and gardens, and meadows, and grain-fields. Singing birds fly everywhere. The plain is very vast, the mountain being far away, and yet the plain continuing as far again beyond it. I see many hamlets, villages, and the battlements and towers of a great city in the distance, all of which add a wondrous beauty because there are beings at hand to enjoy the plain and mountain. I see the sky full of a glorious light; yea, of a soft, white, splendid shine, which has no glare in it, but only a lovely perfection. In one place, close by the river, I see a large manslon, which has a very lofty tower; and this must be a school, or nursery, or some great home, or the like of such, for multitudes of children are playing on the green and in the water with such gambols and merry gestures as no one can tell." Thus did the dying man discourse, and with rapturous speech far beyond

what I have recorded, for he who gives the tale pretends not to have caught the half of the glory of the discourse; nay, nor more than a little part or hint of it. Those who were at hand listened wrapt, thinking that he who was passing away was describing supernal sights, and had vision of what he was going to. By and by he ceased speaking, and then someone asked him a question as to a point that he had spoken of, I know not what, and what more might go with some one of the things he had described in the next world. Whereat he answered that he had been speaking not of the next world, but of this, and not of what he was going to, but of what here he had had and seen, which thus attended him in glory to the last. What thereat befalls in the story I cannot bring up; yet I would like to do so, for here, to my mind, was a very impressive and beautiful moment and a noble fact. I would like, I say, to be able to tell how this answer fell on the hearers, and especially whether they were pleased or not that the fine scene described was earthly after all, and here in this very place of ours, and easily to be seen, and not waited for or longed for, but even now entered upon and inhabited. Whatever it was to those who heard the rhapsody, to me, I must own, it was very joyful to know that it was of this earth he spoke, and

that on the very verge of leaving it the man's soul was filled with the splendors of what he had lived in, and was still clinging to it with joy, and not busy with forecasting. If a man set forth from his home where he has been cherished, and lovely things have been about him—holy chambers, fine galleries, books, pictures, and the like, and dear presence—I care not if he were going to new glories past all imagining, to a fairy-land, or up to the moon, or to the milky way, or whithersoever that is glorious, I would not envy his heart if only or most he looked forward and turned his head but a little, or not at all, to the place he was leaving. So do I say to myself of this story, that the man was taking the better heart with him, ay, and the better mind, and the finer eye for the beauty of whatever he was going to, that thus he was looking back fondly on this earthly mansion of his days. I fear they who were gathered about him felt not in this manner as the story has moved me to feel, but were troubled that he spoke not of heaven instead of earth, and was not describng supernal splendors opening to his eyes, but yet shut from theirs—I fear they were disappointed thus, I say, and let their disappointment appear; for the story runs on that the man began to say how beautiful it should be above his grave. In this it is I find

a match with the lines from Schefer. The man spoke more, however, of the human joys that should go on over the little house of his body, as theretofore they had gone on around him, and he sharing them. Not that he did overlook the beauty of the theatre and the stage wherein the merry acts were set—I mean the fair earth and sky over his grave. For, first, he spoke of the grass and the flowers, and even of the trees which should send down roots close to him, upturning toward the sky and emptying their colors and murmurs upward into the heavens; and of the sky he spoke, bending down and shedding its blue, its sable and starlight and dews in return, on grass and flowers and trees. But, then, he spoke, and most, of the human joys that should play between the grass and the sky. He said: "Merry children shall come, yea! and troops of them, for many a thousand years yet, and play their games over where I shall be laid, and they shall grow to youth, and be lovers, and come to talk and read and sing where now I shall be laid; and they shall become middle-aged and stand solemn and earnest, praying, grieving, rejoicing over the dust of me; and then they shall grow old and sit here watching their children's children play. And well it will be for every one of the old souls if they be as busy with the heavenly splendors of

this earth as now I am, and as hopeful or content to find somewhat like earthly beauties in heaven." With this, it is said, he spoke no more, and no one could tell when he died, so quiet was it.

A LIKE CASE.

On reading Mr. Stevenson's story, "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," I was reminded of a like case which fell under my eyes long ago in the pages of Ludovic Regius, the genial old French Platonist. I wish I might translate the same from the antique French of the master; but I have not the volume by me, and can but recite as my memory serves. The genial Regius (or the acceptable Ludovic, if I follow the affectionate manner in which his readers speak of him, for he is an author much beloved by those who wade deep enough in his quaint wisdom and ancient diction)—the acceptable Ludovic, I say, by the way, came very near to anticipating the new doctrine of development or evolution, as it is expounded in Darwin and others after him; for he says somewhere, though in which one of his treatises I cannot call to mind now, that it is to be noted that all creatures show the same features—all having eyes, nose, mouth, and ears, and many a protuberance answering to a chin, and all of these being found

in a head, and not distributed elsewhere; and so on, with many other like details which the acceptable Ludovic expands with a winsome humor. Thus, he says, we may look on the inferior animals as poor copies of man; and this especially is very plain, he considers, when we take the better kinds of monkeys. After these observations, he asks why we may not turn the thought the other way and say, not that monkeys are poor copies of humanity, but that a man is an improved monkey? And if this may be imagined, then likewise, says he, why is not a monkey an improved other kind of brute whose nose is longer and whose head more peaked or flatter? With this, then, he turns from the body to the mind. If this be so in the outward, why not in the inward, says he. Which thought, he considers, will help us understand two very grave points: first, why the brutes are so much like man, and again (which is the more difficult question, as well as the sadder), why men are so much like brutes. Again, he says it is not needful to think these improvements were made by great leaps; for as we see a monkey between other brutes and men, like watered wine, which is neither one thing nor the other (I distinctly remember this simile, which the acceptable Ludovic is pleased to use), so there may be many grades between

the first improvement on the monkey and the best man, and humanity may have been a long time climbing these degrees or going through the grades. Whence, he says, we have savages, who still remain in the first stages. And some of these savages—Bushmen, Caffres, Hottentots, or what not—are ugly enough in phiz to lend some proper shape to his ideas; for, says he, it is easier to think them the first improvement on a monkey than to think a sage a betterment of them. Now, at this point, the acceptable Ludovic found himself face to face with Revelation—with the Bible, I mean—which by no means he could dispose of at his epoch after the manner of late scientists, namely, by leaving it quietly to itself where it is, in poetry and song, and looking another way. Nevertheless, Ludovic not a bit was staggered with Genesis, but had a royal way of dealing with it. If these thoughts of mine, says he, be called, by any fantastic critic or overscrupulous noddle (I recall these expressions of Ludovic, in which he smiles pleasantly at that kind of faith or religion, which in another place he has compared to the "carrying of porridge in a wooden bucket"), contrary to Scripture —I say, Not so, for this is the very meaning of the Scriptures, in recording that man was created last. Also he remarks, in the very pleasantest

bit in this whole treatise (and I would I had the book by me to give this in full), that Eve (whom heaven forbid we should not call an improvement on Adam! exclaims he, with gallant wit) was made from a rib taken from the more common creature, and this, he argues, is not recorded as anything unusual, but as if it were according to the common method; whence it is scriptural to conclude that in some like manner each higher form was made out of a lower.

If it be asked why the Creator made not the perfect or higher form at once, the acceptable Ludovic answers plainly that this is too hard for his reason; but he adds (and I think it no slight or unwholesome thought) that the question has no place in religion, for piety takes a fact as it is, and is at peace with it. But he goes on to some notable thought on this head, thus: First, he says it is to be noted that by this method of creation, ascending from lower to higher, man is helped greatly; for the lower creatures are not too like him to be willing to serve, and not too unlike him to be able. Secondly, what though they be lower, says he, yet each is perfect and wonderful in its kind. How splendid is a lion as a lion, and even an ant as an ant; and spiders, bees, and the like, what marvels they are! Thirdly, Ludovic has some picturesque

paragraphs about the grace and variety which are given to nature by the multitudinous forms, resembling and again differing, which spring from this way of creation. And finally (or rather fourthly, for I have, I must own, a dim reminiscence of some other thoughts at this point which I cannot bring back), Ludovic has this big thought, which could not but stay with me: Who knows, exclaims he, that the Creator has yet ended any of these lower creatures? For they may go on and improve and unfold hereafter —yea, even into angels and archangels. For, he says (and I know not where perhaps anything finer has been said of death), death is but the concomitant of forms varying and imperfect; for if instantly the creature of God had been created finished and perfect, he would have been unchangeable, and there would have been no death. Therefore, death is but the superscription of the unfinished, and signifies that the same has gone on to be finished.

But enough of this, though it be an attractive subject, and Ludovic has dressed it up through many pages with all manner of cloaks of wisdom and scarfs of wit. I must come to my story, lest it be said that I build my writing like an ill-planned house—all portico and no room. Indeed, I am in danger of this reproach already, for

the story is but a short one, and soon told. Yet I may be saved from too much reproach by the gravity and weight of the story; for the tale will not need that I tell it at much length, nor discourse on it, since one were but a dull mind and duller soul who should not go on to many grave thoughts from the story's end. The acceptable Ludovic gives the story in one of his moral treatises wherein he is speaking at length of the double nature in man, or that warfare in him of which St. Paul speaks, whereby he does what he would not, and does not what he would. Where Ludovic obtained the story I know not; he ascribes it to one Carlo Gelasius, whose book I have never been able to find, and says that by that author the story is placed at Rome in the later empire, when manners had become very decayed and morals very bad among all classes, and yet there were many shining and lovely examples of constancy and virtue glowing in the dark and turbid life, like phosphorescence in soiled sea water. There was a pontiff who before the people lived a pontifical life, by which, of course, is meant not a priestly life as we now understand it, but a pontifical life as the Romans had it; for, as is well known, there was no order of priests among them, but pontiffs were elected like other magistrates or officers of state.

Now, this pontiff led a life of honorable magistracy before the people's eyes, which was like to Dr. Jekyll in Stevenson's story; but it was the unhallowed custom of this pontiff to clothe himself in disguises against recognition, and thus sallying forth by night, to roam, rave, and rage in the worst excesses and most hideous wickednesses of Rome at that time. No haunt of vice but he knew and frequented shamelessly—in which he was like to Hyde in Stevenson's story. Now, also, there was in the city a rich young man disporting himself in the same vicious way, and in every riotous wickedness, but without disguise; nay, rather he boasted of his daring and flaunted his excesses, thinking it valorous to sin and princely to throw his wealth about, and also given to low pleasures. These two, now, the disguised pontiff and the young, reckless rake, met continually in the steaming haunts where their pleasures lay, and thus soon became boon cronies in their vices. Now, like the magistrate, the young man also had a gilded life in good company in the city, being of high rank and rich estate; and in that good company he became betrothed to a very lovely girl, like to Virginia in her innocence, beauty, and seclusion; for her home, and her soul within its shelter, had been always one of those soft-gleaming and

holy lights of nature, of which I have spoken, in the black and muddy whirl of the corruption of the city. The young man had found his way there, like many another such in all ages who beguile innocence, and in good time the marriage was appointed. The day came. The sacrifice was steaming on the altar, and the sacred wheaten cake had been broken, which the vicious youth and innocent maiden were to eat together, and the half of the cake now was handing to each, when the pontiff recognized the rake who had been the comrade of his wanton revels. Here was a situation of horror. Here indeed was a "war in his members." Here now did Jekyll and Hyde wrestle, as in a Roman arena. What should the pontiff do? Denounce the bad fellow? That were to denounce himself. Let him wed, wear and rend that pearl of purity? That were sacrilege impossible to Jekyll, and Hyde then was trembling in Jekyll's grasp. Kill him, and then himself—two thrusts of a poniard, and all over? 'Twould shock, confound, and perhaps kill the maid. So there stood he shaking and pale, with the broken wheaten cake held out, a half in each hand, but not given to the waiting couple, while they and all the guests stood astonished. At last he laid down the two halves of the sacred biscuit, putting them carefully to-

gether as if never broken, and then called to his servant to bring him a certain small chest bound with metal, which, being brought, he opened slowly and took out one after another the means and articles of his disguise in his unhallowed riotings, and slowly put them on him. With a wild cry the infamous young man fled, and, as the story has it, was seen never more, nor ever was it known what was his end. The pontiff, half disguised, half in his suit of vice and half in his pontifical robe, half man and half demon, fell dead on the spot, rent in twain.

FROM THE DABISTAN.

Of the Sacred Seven, Zarathustra, called by the Greeks Zoroaster, is the least known. And this means that very little, indeed, he is known; for of the seven, four at least are little more than grand, glorious shapes, outlines dim in the mist of ages. It is plain that in those hoar-clouds rising from earth to heaven there are these living shapes; but that is all. These four are Zoroaster, Buddha, Moses, and Jesus. Of these, I say, Zoroaster's is the most shadowy outline in the distant vapors. Of the other three, Confucius is more distinct; Socrates is more vivid still. With Mohammed we are in the full blaze of history. But, as I have said, however misty and like a rim of light is the shape of Zarathustra in the hoar-distance, it is plain enough that a man was there, and so with all the other glorious, dim shapes. Myths surround them, but *they* are not myths. In each case a great man was there, though he has come down to us only as if outlined by a pencil of light on white clouds.

Zarathustra's home, we may have some confi-

dence, was in Bactria of Persia. His name was Spitama. Zarathustra means a sacred or spiritual teacher, and was, there is some reason to think, a general title applied to many persons by reason of their having the office of priest, or elder, or teacher in holy things. Spitama Zarathustra, therefore, we might render Spitama, the spiritual sage, or, in Jewish and Christian parlance, the anointed. Afterward the title became a name, as Jesus, the Christ, became Christ, the title of the office becoming the name of the person. And not unfitly, nay, very rightfully; for the office is nothing beside the person, and the great person simply lifted the name from his feet, standing on the office, to his head in the heavens above it. Zarathustra's character was lofty. The Avesta calls him "The one who first spoke good words, first thought good thoughts, first did good deeds." His date is not known. The different epochs assigned by scholars from Aristotle to our own time differ by 5000 years. If we put it near the time of Moses, say not less than 1000 nor more than 1500 years before Christ, we shall be most reasonable. If the earliest and highest teachings of the Zend-Avesta be called his, it is likely that this is true. Therefore, if we think of him as a quickener of a purer and more spiritual religion than he

found at hand, and a teacher of one holy, infinite God, and of an opposing evil spirit who at last was to be subdued and the good be "all in all," we shall not be far wrong, and perhaps in the very truth itself. With this we shall have said all that is known about him.

But lovely stories cluster around him—not such a number or mass of them as in some religions hang on the mighty shapes like robes of rainbows in the distant vapors, but stories full of pictures, and with some tender touches. Those which relate to the birth and childhood of the sage I will recount from the Dabistan. The story is that the holy child was born to his parents after the father had taken a beaker of wine from an angel; or, by another version, after he had received the milk of a cow which had fed on some leaves that had fallen from a tree and become dried. Either way, the child when he was born welcomed himself and the world with a peal of bright laughter, so says the book; and his brain beat so mightily that a hand laid on his head was thrown off by the pulse. Upon this follow the stories of the persecution and the saving of the holy child. The wonders of his birth being announced abroad, the Governor of the province was filled with fear, and, like Herod, sought out the child in his humble dwelling and

drew his saber to cut off the infant's head, but his arm instantly withered at the shoulder. After that a priest came and saw the child's face shining like a spring morning, and he drew his dagger to kill him, but also his arm instantly shriveled. After these brief legends come the more glowing and picturesque stories. The first is the legend of fire, as follows:

When the wonders of the birth were noised abroad, and the withering of the arm of the Governor and of the priest, a great fear fell on all the magicians and priests, and straightway they met together to take counsel how they might ward away this new danger. For, said the priests, surely this little child, whose face shines like the spring morning, is come to undo us all, and take our office from us, and overthrow the ancient rites with a new religion; else why should his face shine like the morning? And surely, said the magicians, this little child will arise, if we be not careful, and put us all to shame, and do such wonders as, with all our enchantments, we cannot equal; and our livelihood will be taken from us, and the people will run no more to us, but to him; else why did his brain beat as it did when he was born? and why did he laugh as if even then we were but a game to him? Now, as I have said, when the priests and

the magicians learned that they were all of one mind, they met together to devise how they might do away with the child. At last they resolved to throw him into a fire. Thereupon they found a good place among some rocks in a waste place, with some woods hard by. Under the trees they gathered a great store of old wood, very dry, quick food for the flames, which they piled in a vast heap among the rocks. The heap was rounded like a dome, but in the top of it was made a hollow like a nest, which they lined with straw and shreds, very inflammable. Over this they poured much naphtha. When thus the pile was ready, they stole the little child from his mother, laid him in the nest on the top of the pile, and fired it at the bottom in four places, one toward the north and the others toward the south, the east, and the west. The flames shot up to the heavens; but, says the chronicler, they played like cooling streams round the little child, and the roar of them was like the soft murmur of waters, so that the infant laughed and played, as gradually he sank down through the consuming pile till he was left lying like a newly washed rose on the rosy embers. And there his mother, when she came looking for him, found him as ruddy as the coals that bore him like the lap of a nurse.

When the priests and magicians found themselves foiled thus, and the divine babe only washed by the flames, not harmed, they plotted again. There was a narrow road on a hill-side, a gentle slant, a half-day's journey beyond the waste place where the fire had been made. The road was hemmed with a wall on each side of it. It was a place where droves of cattle came, always filling up the road in the narrowest pass in it and crowded together between the walls so that there was no hand-breadth on the road that was not trodden by their hoofs. Thither the priests and magicians brought the little Zarathustra, having stolen him again from his cradle, and they left the little child in the middle of the road at the most straitened part of it. Soon the cattle came herding and crowding along, crowding closer as the road narrowed, till they trod one the hoof of another, and their horns rattled together. The road was in a rocky place and was hard, so that little dust was thrown up; and the wind, moreover, was blowing gently toward the herd, so that the cloud was cleared away and driven behind them. Thus the air, as they came on, was as clear in front of them as on a high hill. Now, there was in the herd a beautiful cow of a shape fairer than all the other cattle. Her head was slender, her

nose was pink, her horns were like amber, her ears were lined with a down-like silk, her legs were as slender as an antelope's, and her hoofs shone like burnished jet; her eyes were like moonlight, and she was as white all over as the sea-foam. This beautiful creature, being in the front rank of the coming herd, saw afar off the little child sleeping in the roadway; whereupon the cow ran swiftly ahead till she came to the sleeping babe. Here she showed how one may act in a good cause just as another has behaved himself in an evil cause. For, as Bunyan narrates in the strife between Christian and the fiend, "Then Apollyon straddled quite over the whole breadth of the way, and said, 'I am void of fear in this matter,'" so did the cow stretch herself like a strong arch over the child, her black hoofs set wide apart on either side of him, says the chronicler, but careful not to straddle the whole way, like Apollyon, but to leave room on each side for the passing of the cattle. And she was "void of fear in this matter," and lowering her head, shook her horns and made herself so fierce, and so pushed and threatened, that she made a clean lane through the cattle and parted them into two streams, so that the child was left midway and unharmed. After all had passed, the cow went her way likewise. Soon came the

mother, as before, looking for her child, and found him safe on a little clear space on the ground where he had slept, with not a hand-breadth outside of that space, behind or before, but was trampled by the cattle. And she took her child home, wondering much and still more rejoicing.

At this the priests and magicians fell into a great fury, and they said to each other: "The child would have been trampled to death but for the eyes of the cow that cast sight before her like moonbeams. Let us lay him forth again, this time in the narrow pass betwixt the ditch and the ridge, where the wild horses go." This they did, having chosen a day filled with a thick fog, so that the child might not be seen by any of the herd of horses until he was under their hoofs. But, while always before they had taken the child asleep, now, so did heaven overshadow and guard him, they found him awake, and had to take him as he was, crowing and laughing gayly, and making as many blithe sounds in his glee as birds in the bushes. When he was left in the sea of fog on the narrow causeway 'twixt the ditch and the ridge, he kept up his gleeful prattle, and it served him well, for however the fog hid him from sight, it made a quicker footway still for his laughings and crowings to run on, and

straight they did run to the ears of a beautiful mare among the wild herd. Straightway she ran on in advance, and standing over the little prophet as the cow had done, turned the horses to either side, and they went rushing past with erect manes and tails and flaring nostrils, looking as if they had seen a spirit.

After this third miracle of rescue the priests, whose fables were outdone, and the magicians, whose conjuring was put to shame, no less were confounded than they were burning with wrath, and as much were filled with fear as with hatred. But both the passions, the fear and the hatred, pricked them on, so that again they met for more and better plotting, if they might destroy the child by any means. At last one of them bethought him of the lair of the wolves, and all the others exclaimed that this was a brave thought, and that now the child would be done away with surely. So the one who thought of it was set to watch the wolves till he had found out when they went off in a pack and when returned, and where was a den of cubs in the lair. When he had made known all this to his comrades, they stole the child again, at the time when the pack of wolves had gone prowling, carried him to the lair, killed the two cubs and sprinkled their blood on the ground, and laid the

child down near them. This was in the night, while the wolves were hunting. Back they came in the morning, wild and fierce and hungry, for they had taken no prey. When they came near the lair they sniffed the gouts of blood on the ground, and soon they came to the dead cubs and the child beside them. Then ran forward a huge wolf, the patriarch of them, old and gaunt and fierce, with ravening mouth stretched wide. But when he reached the child his mouth suddenly shut tightly with a snap, and he could not open it. It was, says the Dabistan, held shut as closely as if his lips had been sewn together. Thereupon all the wolves were struck with wonder, and slowly backed away from the child, and then lay down on the ground in a wide circle about him, with their snouts all pointed toward him, and their eyes never for a moment turned away from the divine infant. But they had made the circle so large that, as they lay close together, one touching the other, there was a small arc of the circle left unfilled. Now, on a wooded hill near by, some sheep were grazing, among which was such a beautiful one as had never been seen in that country before. She had long wool hanging like a fleecy robe around her legs, and, like the cow, she was as white as sea-foam. A little lamb was running with her. The sheep with her

lamb left the flock, came down the hill of the pasture and through the forest and the glen to the lair of the wolves, and walked round the circle of them until she came to the arc left open. Through this she went in, giving no heed to that fiery ring of eyes, lay down by the little child, and suckled him and her lamb together. When both had been fed, then she took the child unto her and the little lamb on the other side of him, so that between the two soft, woolly fleeces he went as snugly asleep as in his own basket. It was a sad mother that sought her babe all that long night, wandering in many places, first to the place of the fire, and then to the rocky road of the cattle, and then to the straight pathway of the wild horses, until from a hill, when the dawn came, she saw the wolves in the circle and the white sheep in the midst of them. To see this sight, and why it was that the wolves set not on the sheep and tore her to pieces, the mother drew near, and saw first the lamb and then her own little one between the sheep and the lamb, asleep on the downy fleece. Then the mother understood that her child again had been preserved by the heavenly hosts, and she entered the wolfish circle as the sheep had done, and took up her child. Nor did the wolves stir from their trance, though their eyes shot flames, till the

mother had got away with her child to her home and the sheep with her lamb to the pasture.

I will relate now the legends in the Dabistan that have to do with the adult life of Zarathustra, his career as a prophet of a religion. There are some shorter ones, with few details, and setting forth only one scene or picture. Such is the tradition that the prophet received many revelations from the midst of the holy symbolical flames. I suppose a voice issued from them. Another story is the temptation of Zarathustra by the evil spirit, Ahriman. The evil one tempted him to reject the Avesta and forswear the true faith; but the prophet put him to flight by reciting some verses from the sacred Avesta. Again, the prophet was traveling with a company on his first coming forth from Bactrĭa to go on his mission throughout Iran, when he came to a river where was no boat. Then he prayed, and afterward he and all his company walked over the water, wetting no more than the soles of their feet. A longer story, but relating to a time after Zarathustra, is the legend of the cypress. Zarathustra brought from heaven a branch of cypress and planted it in Kashmir, where it grew to a glorious tree, the fame of which reached to Bagdad. The Calif at last ordered it cut down and brought to him, because of its great renown. When his

servants laid ax to the tree amid the entreaties and tears of the people who dwelt around it, a vast flock of birds flew from its branches and filled the air with their plaintive cries and bewailings, and all the cattle of the hills that lay in the shade of it gathered, with moans and sorrowful lowings, and the sheep, with pitiful bleatings, so that the whole air was full of mourning. But the heavenly tree was hewn down and dragged off by a vast army of camels. But when yet only a little distance on its way, the servants were met by a messenger to tell of the assassination of the Calif that same hour; so that the wicked despoiler never saw the fruits of his sacrilege. These are the shorter legends; the others are all connected together into one story, which I will now relate:

Zarathustra was visited by the chief of all the angels. The angel came arrayed in a robe of light, and said to him: "What dost thou most desire in this world?" And Zarathustra answered: "I have no desire but that of pleasing God." "Arise," said the angel, "that thou mayest appear before God." Then Zarathustra was suddenly caught up into the highest heaven, into the company of a great, shining assembly of spirits, and they shone with such a light that, though they threw no shadows themselves, Zara-

thustra's body, being of the earth, cast a long, dark shadow in the heavenly courts. The spirits bowed down to him because he was the elected prophet of Ahura Mazda on the earth, and then thronging about him, they led him into the Most High presence. From God, himself the prophet then received the Scriptures of the Zend-Avesta, with the command to return to the earth and take the Scriptures to the Persian King, and then to all the world. But first, thus having seen heaven, the prophet was led into hell, that he might see the flaming and dreadful misery of it; and the merciful story is that he carried away with him one man because the man belonged not in that dire place, since once in his life he had done a holy deed. I find much comfort and good grace in this part of the story; and here is a good place to say that in the Parsee faith, as it is in Zarathustra's teachings, there is no everlastingness of torment and evil, but at last even Ahriman has all the ill burned out of him, and hell itself falls to a heap of ashes.

After these events, Zarathustra was brought back to the earth by the angels, and forthwith set out on his journey to the King. Two adventures befell him on the way. He met soon a great host of magicians and demons who had come together to stop him. They fell on him

with cries and cursings and threats, and commanded him to throw away the Zend-Avesta and abjure the faith of the new Scriptures. But Zarathustra began to recite to them a chapter from the Avesta. At the first sentence they stood, and their cries died to a murmur. With the next sentence they were all stilled and made dumb, trembling. With the next, the voices of wrath which had died awoke again to be cries of terror. Then began the horrid horde to sway and clutch each other and shriek, and as Zarathustra went on reading, the demons broke away and buried themselves in the earth; the enchanters fled. A few that staid, and heard yet a few more words of the Avesta, fell dead. So the prophet went his way and met no more armies, but found before long two kings on the road. With these he lingered that he might expound to them the new religion. But they scorned and derided him. On this the prophet prayed, as his wont was. It is to be noted in all these tales of the Dabistan that Zarathustra worked his wonders by prayer, never by any speech of his own, nor by stretching out of any staff or wand, nor by any enchantments or magical words—by no words less simple than the reciting of some verses from the Avesta, and by no words less holy than prayers. So he prayed, as I have said, and instantly the

two kings were caught up high in the air, where they hung suspended on naught. The people soon gathered in a great crowd, some pointing and hooting, and others wondering and affrighted to see the two monarchs thus hung up in the sky. But soon from every quarter there came flying and screaming a vast concourse of birds of prey, so that they darkened the sky; and they fell on the hapless kings and tore them with their beaks and talons, and fed on them till there was no flesh left, and the dry bones fell to the earth.

After these signs and wonders Zarathustra came to the court of the King of Iran. When he was ready to enter the King's presence he made himself the more ready by prayer, and then boldly went in. As he came under the portal he stretched out his arm, and instantly his hand was full of flaming coals, which burned him not; and so he entered the King's presence as if his body were an altar bearing the holy fire. Then he poured the flaming coals into the King's hand, who also carried them without being burned, and then into the hands of all the courtiers in turn; so that the flame was carried around the audience room by all the nobles and attendants, and even every little page, and no hand was scathed. Then Zarathustra announced his mission to the King and set before him the Zend-Avesta. At

this came the philosophers and sages of the city —sixty of them—who sat themselves around Zarathustra, thirty on one side and thirty on the other, and they disputed with the prophet; but Zarathustra answered all their questions, and put them to shame with his own questions which they could not answer. After this defeat the philosophers met together and brought out their most learned books, and studied hard all night. The next day they met Zarathustra again with a hundred questions which they had made ready for him. But again he answered them in everything, and then asked things of them which by no means they could tell; and so again they were silenced. Soon all the great men and wise men and chiefs of the people were met together in such a company as never was seen in all Iran before; and they spent many days striving to put Zarathustra to silence; but he was ready in all points, and full of power and wisdom, and when he began to question them, they could not answer. When all this had happened, and truth and wisdom in the mouth of Zarathustra had triumphed, he offered the holy Zend-Avesta to the King. But the King asked him what signs he would give of his divine mission. Here I must say that I understand not this request of the King; for if the unscathing coals which he had held in

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his own hands, and the victories of the prophet over all the wise men, were no signs to him, what indeed would be signs? or what would satisfy him? But perhaps he thought the prophet might be a clever conjurer, as we read in our Scriptures that, after some wonders wrought by Moses, the magicians of Egypt "did in like manner with their enchantments." However it be, Zarathustra answered him as did the Nazarene in like case, when he bade the people look about them for a sign and understand the signs of the times, even as they did the signs of the weather. "This book is its own sign," said Zarathustra; "the Avesta itself is the sign. Receive it, O King, because it is the wisdom of Ahura Mazda." On this the King said he would study the Avesta, which the prophet must leave with him, for it was no little thing to take a new worship and a new Scripture. And so Zarathustra went to his abiding-place, but the King commanded that he should come every day to the palace that he might know how the King fared in his study of the new book.

Now, when the wise men and sages found that they could make no headway against Zarathustra, but were all put to shame in their disputations with him, they plotted together how they might overcome him by a trick. When he had gone

forth the next day, they prevailed with the keeper for money that he should let them into the chamber of Zarathustra; and then under his pillow they put a heap of filthy, defiling things—blood and hair, cats' heads, dogs' heads, and dead men's bones, says the Dabistan; and having so defiled the place where the prophet's head lay, they hurried after him to the palace. "O King," they cried, "we have discovered that this Spitama is but an impostor, a deceitful fellow, a lying knave—no better than any common sorcerer! And this the King may see if he will but send to his chamber and see what vileness he has under his pillow."

This the King did secretly, saying nothing to Zarathustra, and when he found the filthy things under the pillow he fell into a great wrath and threw the prophet into the common prison. And there Zarathustra staid for many days, with but little bread and water to keep him alive. But on the very next morning after the prophet was sent to the jail, a great wonder befell in the King's stables. When the doors were opened, there lay the King's great black charger on the ground, and lo! his legs were gone as if drawn inward. Great was the running and the hurrying to and fro in the palace and the city; and all the physicians of the city were called, and

then of all Iran; but no one could bring forth the legs. Then all the wise men were called, but they walked round the horse and looked at each other aghast, and departed. Then were called all the magicians, and they said many spells and boiled many witch-pots; but the legs came not out. Now the news of this trouble reached Zarathustra in the prison, and he asked the jailer to say to the King that he could set the matter right. Straightway the King had him brought from the prison; but Zarathustra made four conditions. The first was that the King should believe in the holy new faith and accept the Avesta, the Scripture of it. This being granted, Zarathustra kneeled and prayed as his wont was, and immediately the right fore leg shot forth from the body. "The second condition," said Zarathustra, "is that the son of the King, the Prince Isfendiar, shall believe, with all his household." This being done, and the Prince having confessed the faith, the prophet prayed again, and forth came the right hind leg of the charger. On this Zarathustra demanded the third condition, that two officers be sent with him to the presence of the Queen that he might convert her. This being done, and the Queen having given her soul heartily to the new faith, Zarathustra lifted his voice again, and out sprang the left hind leg.

Then Zarathustra demanded that the King send for the keeper of his abode and ask of him who put the defiling matter under the prophet's pillow. This the King did instantly, and when the wise men thus were uncloaked the King had them seized and put to death forthwith. Whereupon once more Zarathustra entreated, and the left fore leg came out. Thus the splendid charger was whole again. Belike there was a figure or prognostic hidden in the regained legs of the charger; for as thereby he could go his way along the road again, so was the King now strengthened to walk the way of salvation. He and his household, and after them the city, and then Iran, became of the new faith, and the Avesta was received.

This story of the King's charger, it must be said, is a little uncouth and grotesque. It makes a figure that looks a little foreign and fantastic in the circle of the Dabistan stories of the Parsee prophet. It is quaint to the verge almost of riot ing or wantonness of fancy. Hardly it seems good company for sacred legends; hardly a clear, benign star for a religious zodiac. Yet it is not to be scorned or scoffed at. If Emerson be right—as who will deny?—that mankind, each race for itself, is the greatest of all poets, and there is no singer like to the whole community, it will not be

strange that sometimes the whole follow the part, and the community do like the single poet so far as to sing out of tune a little, or make but a sorry fable sometimes. Besides, are the sprouting out of the four legs of the horse more grotesque than the bubbling of all Egypt with frogs, or the changing of Moses' staff into a wriggling serpent? Moreover, I find such stories no little touching in the strength of faith which they reveal in the simple souls of the faithful. For they are not grotesque to the believers, but taken for symbols; yes, and with awe, as being the presence of the very hand of Almightiness.

The cycle of the Zarathustra legends of the Dabistan ends with another tale, no less picturesque than the foregoing, and more delicate and shapely. It is the story of the four wishes of the King. The King prayed Zarathustra that he might be granted four things, to wit: To see at once his own future state, place and rank in Paradise; to be made invulnerable, so that he might be able to spread the new faith unhindered by wars and wounds; to have all knowledge; and to remain alive in the body till the day of judgment. The prophet told him that these four great things could not be granted to one person, lest he should be filled with pride and think

himself one of the heavenly powers, but that one of them should be granted to the King, and the other three to members of his house. Thereupon, in the night, Zarathustra did as before; I mean he bowed himself in prayer. With the early morning came four glorious horsemen to the King's gates, and when they came before the King they shone with such a light that the King was overpowered and fell off his throne in a trance. The great beings announced that they were the four highest angels, come to tell the King that his wishes were granted by the King of Heaven. Then, when the divine embassy was gone, Zarathustra went alone into a room of the palace, taking with him some wine, some milk, some perfume, and a pomegranate. By these he knelt, and over them he bowed a long time, reciting verses and prayers from the holy Avesta. Then to the King he gave a drop of the wine filled with the voice of the prayers of the Avesta which the prophet had recited over the cup. Straightway the King fell into a deep, beautiful sleep, and his soul was snatched to the place kept for him in Paradise, and he saw it, and then came back to his body, and his body had lain blooming like a rose twenty-one days in a trance, while the King's soul was beyond the stars. Then Zarathustra gave to a son of the King a drop of

that milk which had been filled with the everlastingness of the Scriptures which the prophet had recited over the flagon; and straightway the Prince's body was filled with life and power to stay as it was till the judgment day. Then Zarathustra gave to a brother of the King one breath of that perfume which had been filled with the essence of the holy Avesta when the prophet had recited the verses over the vase of it; and straightway with that breath of divine odor there came into the Prince's nostrils the ether of all knowledge of good and evil, from the beginning to the end. Then Zarathustra gave to the Prince Isfendiar a single grain of that pomegranate into which had gone the strength of the holy Avesta; and immediately the body of the Prince became like brass, which no blade could cut and no blow could break. Thus the four wishes of the King were completed in his household.

These are the legends of the Dabistan set on the brow of Zarathustra like a crown. Thus did the world in its simple days speak its religion. Thus did the people sing their faith when they were child-like enough to sing by the way, because they were happy and because they believed. Truly, to my mind, it was a way of speaking and singing religion so simple and pure that it has arisen and become starry over our heads in the far night of time.

I delight to disport myself among these stories, and with as rare pleasure as any child can, but in a different way, for the children take them as stories only, and delight in the pictures and incidents of them (as, indeed, so do I, and quaff rare fresh draughts of fancy from them), but I forget not that also they show me my own childhood again, and, moreover, the childhood of the human family, which is more and better to be shown and to behold. For these quaint fancies, simple pictures, and pure images were sacred when they flourished. And 'tis like enough there are nooks and corners where still they live in the small Parsee population on the earth. And I would envy not his mind who would not take them religiously in a way as a primeval tongue of worship. I can think of them but as a language, for what human thing comes not forth with the color of the whole soul? And then as a language of religion; for they were taken very simply, and were meant just as they appear, and were the utterance of faith in a present omnipotence. They are simple, direct, forthspringing like creatures of the earth. Forsooth, they are creatures of the creatures, being creatures of the simple, primitive man at his prayers. And no wonder he is so creative, being at his prayers. Truly, what marvels these stories would be if *now* they were

made, if *now* they were upspringing by the wayside. But this cannot be. The old Earth keeps its trick of shaking flowers from its lap by the road; but men no more have the art of this artlessness of story-telling and believing. For now they are busy with such heaped-up inventions, with such machinery, sciences, transportations; with such wagons, cars, roads, ships, that no time or mind is left but to manage them. Let us love the more the old stock of stories.

MORNING.

Scientius Curiosus, as he tells us in his preface, made it the work of his life to rescue scraps of history just lapsing into oblivion. In his strange *melange*, I came on the authentic and real history of the ever-memorable incident of Diogenes and his tub. It will be remembered that the story runs that that gypsyish philosopher was once approached by a great man who, pitying the sage for the meagre shelter which the tub gave, asked, with a contemptuous sneer, what he could do for him, and that Diogenes answered, "Nothing, but get out of my sunlight." One tradition further adds that the philosopher happened to be mending his tub when he was thus accosted and when thus he answered. Further than this the common accounts go not. But in Scientius I discovered (and Scientius remarks, and very wisely to my mind, that herein lies the gist of the story) that the event took place early in the morning, after the philosopher had passed a contented night in his tub, and had just awakened with his eyes bared to the sky. It was at that moment that

the shadow of the sneering visitor cut off his sunlight, and Diogenes reprimanded him. As I have said, Scientius considers the answer of the philosopher unintelligible, or else a mere churlishness, unless taken with the fact that he was just awaking, but that so taken it blooms with a beautiful and delicate sense of the value of the waking moment and of the heedlessness or unkindness of the person who will put himself between the sunlight and an awaking eye. Scientius, indeed, is stirred to several eloquent pages by this text, on the morning and the right way of waking up. With much that is fanciful and much that is purely pedantic (for, after the fashion of his day, Scientius seems to have raked and scraped every nook and alley of learning for whatever came within telescopic range of his subject), the author has many wise moral remarks, some of which I will borrow.

Scientius speaks first of sleep. Going to sleep, he avers, is wholly each one's own affair. One may drop away prayerfully, holily, humbly, ambitiously, guiltily, ill-humoredly, or howsoever, and, but for what may follow in his dreams, it is no matter; though even in this, observes Scientius humorously, so closely are we all bound together, others may be interested. For if a man fall asleep so unwholesomely as to

grunt, cry out, and struggle in ill dreams, he will disturb the neighbors. But waking up is very different. While we close our eyes for ourselves alone, we open them in very great measure for all other persons. Therefore, the waking moment has a double importance. First, for ourselves—what a mighty difference is it whether we start rightly or wrongly on the day! For a day is, after all, a huge time, and one may go a vast distance in it; and but a little angle at the beginning of it may sweep an almost infinite space at so many hours away from the vertex. Therefore, to set out in the morning with a good motive, with kind feelings, with a wise survey how to turn the day to beautiful account, is the wisdom that belongs to the hour, and will determine where we find ourselves after an hour or two, and still more at the end of a long day, as Scientius observes—whether in a light that makes a long and lovely twilight to bed-time, or in a blackness which we have been smearing all over the hours, as if we dragged the night with us all day. Besides, in the morning all blessings come like a throng of company at once. There is the light, refreshed strength, new plans, new thoughts, familiar faces, meetings, language, good appetite, food, and drink. How churlish the mind that receives all these visitors with

scant welcome, rude grumblings, and ungrateful manners! But, secondly, our way of waking has much import for others. Here recurs the wisdom of Diogenes. It is surly and unhandsome ever to turn our waking eyes back toward murky night in a dark corner, not welcoming the light which stands cap in hand, the white feather thereof brushing the sky, making his morning bow to us; but it is a crime indeed to drive that good Sir Knight out of doors for all other persons who live with us. "No man liveth to himself," says Paul, and no man waketh to himself, which is a new beginning of life with each day. It is a wretched hardihood and a selfish impiety to wake with a grumbling spirit, or with a fever of yesterday's fatigue making us fretful, or with forebodings for the day raising a foggy ingratitude, whereby we disturb the setting forth of all persons about us and send them their several ways with hurt feelings, with ill-humor, with perturbed souls, with dashed courage and hope. Surely these are wise remarks, which for oneself have good cautions in them, and for others great kindness.

Scientius, again, has much to say of the importance of parental waking up. He draws a fine picture of the responsibility that rests on whomever wakes first, the father or mother, since

that one has waked both for himself and for the other one who is yet sleeping. Then, turning, Scientius observes again that the spouse who wakes last has also much to answer for; for if the first one have waked happy and started well, he is at best but a little way along one leg of the angle, and may be dragged back by the bad waking humors of the other, and set going on the other leg into a day of darkness. Therefore, concludes Scientius, it is difficult to tell of bed-fellows whether the first waking or the second waking be the more responsible; from which it appears that the importance of each is great. If this be true, then how great the joint effect of two wakings on the children and on the whole household. This latter thought the author follows into many curious observations; but I must refer the reader to the book itself, where he will find them expanded with great ingenuity and no little instruction.

But here, at risk that the reader will accuse me of a strange leap, hardly to be endured in the art of the pen, I will run off to a friend of mine, who is known to me affectionately as Tom; and what his other name is has no concern with his story or with my reason for now bringing the reader to him. That reason is, that no little of a certain uncommon success which he has had

turns on this doctrine of Scientius regarding the morning; although Tom had it from a modern source. But the reader shall judge for himself from my friend's story.

Tom's wife is the delight and admiration of his friends; yet the reason is seen plainly only by nice observation and some thought added thereto. She is not beautiful in face, though in form graceful; but Tom will not have it so, averring that her face is none the less lovely because its beauty, being expression and the outpouring of delicate feelings, is reserved for him alone, or mainly. Nevertheless, I say she would not be called fair, and surely not brilliant. A very quiet presence she is, the most noticeable thing being a rare kind of peace in her presence, a something warm in the room as if no chill could enter, and no one of the hackneyed cares of the day crowd into that essential and glowing quiet. It is confessed on all hands she is a rare woman, with a rare kind of genius, a marvelous might to make comfort and turn forth joy, as wonderful as any poet's metres, rhymes, or thoughts. The wonder is how Tom, a very good fellow, but ordinary, ever divined her to seek her. The wonder, I say—that is, to others, not to me, for I have drawn the secret from him. I find that, ordinary in exterior or manners, and

little read in learned lore or given to books or to deep thinking, Tom has a wisdom which has taken hold of the signs by which things show themselves in life as they are. He told me he owed his choice of his wife to two fortunate facts; his choice of her, I say, for as to what led her choice to him he humbly confesses his ignorance, and says she must have had that missionary or Sister of Charity spirit which transmutes somebody's great need into one's own great love. He was led to her by two thoughts, as follows: Once, on Sunday, in a church, he heard a preacher utter this sentence: "It is not necessary we should be loved, but it is very necessary that we should love." Tom seized on this as a bit of wisdom worth following to its length, and brooded much on it at odd moments, for he was not given to set thought. Now, it so happened that during the next summer, which followed shortly, he was spending his holiday at a pleasant lake-side. Idly fishing in a cove, he heard a number of merry girls in a thicket on the shore, laughing as they described what they would require in their expected lovers and husbands. Now, all agreed, according to Tom, that the first requisite was entire, constant, tender, chivalric devotion. They all declared, said Tom, that the point of first importance was that they should

be loved—all but one; one voice, which had been silent, answered at last to the railing challenge of her comrades, quietly, with serious tone, that, for her part, she thought the first and second and last requisite was that she herself should love. Tom started. Lo! the remembered sentence from the sermon! He recognized the voice; he resolved to know more of the speaker. So far for the first thought. For the second, Tom avers that he was greatly impressed by a reference in Emerson to Lord Holland, to the effect that always he came down to breakfast looking as if some sudden good fortune had just befallen him. In this, Tom says, he caught a fine element of judgment as to character; for, he argued, the important point is the starting; if one deviate but little at the center and go to a wide circumference, he will be a vast space away. This is the wisdom of Browning:

> O, the little more and how much it is,
> And the little less and what worlds away!

So, reasoned Tom, it is plain that the morning's start is the secret of the day's journey, whether to light or to shadow; and the day's start is the secret of the week's goal, and the week's start of the month, and the month's start

of the year. It is plain enough, said my ordinary friend, therefore, that the secret of life's contentment and the whole power to shed peace and pleasure lies in your way of waking up. Now, Tom, O astute fellow! does not hesitate to own that deliberately he set to work to learn the waking-up of this same young girl who had startled him by joining her ideal to the preacher's rule of life. But how did he accomplish this? Ah! what a convenience, what a treasure, power, resource, in great and pressing exigencies of life is a sister! Tom had a sister; therein the story is told. She was able to discover—by what wiles, what nights, mornings, waking moments of comradeship, who knows? Suffice it, she learned, and told Tom. "An angel," cried Tom, "truly an angel, whose first morning look is a beam of light and of peace; and her philosophy for the day, not to receive, but to give. On this warrant," says Tom, "I sought, I spoke, I won, to the blessing of day after day and week after week, but especially, and as the source of all other blessings, to the blessing of my waking-time, by which I am set with my face right, and so move off freely every day."

DEATH AS A NEIGHBOR.

A story from Meuleville is difficult to render, not because of the old French, for I will match the English with his prose without any faint or fall of our tongue, which will hold its own with any other, but because of his verse; for every language has its own great genius in verse, and there is a meaning in the rhythms and sounds added to the sense of the words, which it is not easy to handle in the case of Meuleville's old French. However, I will give his verse in verse, for it is no more than fair to him, since he has chosen it so. With this, I wish to tell from him a Hebrew legend, as he says it is, though whence he had it I know not, and I have met with it but this once in my life.

A child lay sick in a little cabin or humble house in the country. Around him was a group of the family and some neighbors. The little fellow, named Abi, indeed was very sick. The rabbi had come to the house, for he was a friend of the family, and they had sent for him. Now, while they were watching the child, suddenly

there came a tremor or a quaking, not very visible, yet shaking the house and their hearts too; for at this strange trembling their hearts turned faint. They said to one another, "Go out and see if Death be coming;" for, so the story goes, they knew from many other times that so did the earth shake when death was traveling on it. The house was on a little hill rising from a plain out of a wide forest which at that point covered the plain to the very foot of the knoll; but far away, not too far for the eye to reach, the wood ended, and there was a green level. Through the trees of the forest, and out beyond into the plain, the road stretched, and it was straight for a long distance, both through the forest and into the green open. Now, when one said, "Go out and see if Death be coming," straightway two or three ran out of the house onto the hill, and a little higher up, to a place whence the road could be seen well; and they looked forth. And there, indeed, they descried Death coming swiftly on a white horse. The horse was rushing forward at a great pace.

Running and bounding with mighty leaping, and neck outstretched like an arrow,
Came the white steed, coursing like light! The road lay long and narrow,
Slender and shining like a silken band, along through the forest trees,

Entering the waving plain of grass, and shining still through the meadow,
Running as runneth the stream of a brook, to the river first, then to the seas,
Flashing and silvering on the dusky earth, like a ray over a shadow.
Flashing and silvering so was the horse on the road, and his mane on the breeze.
Smiting the road with his hoof, it smoked, and when he had passed, each hollow—
Filling with turbulent billows of vapor, that bury each other and follow
Stormily one on another—is surged with a wash of a blackness of cloud
Floating on the dun of the mists of the hollows, like sable lace on a shroud.
Smiting the earth with his hoof, it shook; and shot and rushed the vibration
Forward, and seized the bed of the boy that it swung back and forth at its station.
Frightfully bent the trees, swaying down to the earth as Death passed;
Bowing not only their branches and tops, but their trunks sturdy and vast,
Doubling them down as a workman his body bending to strain at his need,
Doubling and turning their trunks, groaning and creaking and making of speed,
Hasting to brush with their branches the highway clean for the rush of the steed.
Bounding and running with mighty leaping and neck outstretched he came,
Terribly snorting, with nostrils quivering, and his breath was flashing of flame.
Fiery shot the sparks from his eye, and burned, that the gleam of the day,
Shining, and the white of the horse like light, shut not the sparks away.
Running and bounding with mighty leaping came on the ghostly steed;

On him was Death, black on the white, spurring him up to his speed.

Beholding and quaking in their hearts with this, the two or three who had come out ran back to the house, crying out that Death was hard by, and coming like the wind. Then all of them gave a great cry and beat their breasts, but the rabbi stilled them, to listen while he told them that Death was coming for the little Abi. "But," quoth the rabbi, "I have heard that sometimes Death may be sent away without the soul which he intended to seize, by means of changing the name of the sick one. Let us change now the name of the child." Whereupon, lifting up his voice solemnly and spreading his hands over the child, and asking the parents what new name they would give the boy, and they answering "Joseph," he cried out, "Thou art not Abi! thou art Joseph. By this name be known on the earth." Now, scarcely was this done than Death, who had arrived, came in and demanded Abi; and they answered to Death, "Have you come for Abi?" "Even so," quoth Death. "Then," said they, "you have lost your way and come to the wrong house, for this little, sick child is Joseph." Whereupon Death, having no warrant for Joseph, withdrew, though much wondering how he had lost his way.

After a time, when some years had passed, the child fell sick again, and Death, with a warrant for Joseph, came as before. But this time (for Death had found it needful to be wary and take the people by surprise, so much had they fallen to changing names thus to escape him) Death came by night, and not on a tramping steed shaking the earth, but cunningly and quietly on his own feet, walking softly on the road. But all nature knew him, and though the earth shook not, yet there came a dead silence over all things; and suddenly in the stillness there arose a great sobbing and wailing and crying of the wind. When they in the house heard this, some cried as before, "Go out and see if Death be coming with this wail of the wind." But one answered, "How can we see, since it is dark?" But another cried, "Know you not that Death has a terrible eye? You will see it afar, and the better the darker the night is." Then ran out two or three as before, and went up the hill a little to look down the road through the forest. But never was such a darkness, and never the road so sunk from sight before.

> The trees bowed down their tops
> And met over the road;
> The path whereon Death strode
> Now must be pitted with drops,

With drops and splashes, of night.
Sometimes then Death did stride
And boldly on did sweep
Wherever the dark was deep;
And sometimes Death did hide
And warily did creep,
Where any open space
Would cover not his face.
Black night was blacker made
By images in streams
Wherein trees sank like beams
One end in Erebus laid.
But blacker than such night,
And thicker than such shade,
And darker than blind eyes
That once have had their sight,
Was now the quaking road
Where Death crept on or strode.
Down over bowed the wood,
And bent with horror stood.
The trees entwined their arms
To fearful mats of gloom,
And rose a desolate breeze,
Howling and wild, the trees
Further to twist and twine
And all their tops combine.
The horrible dark was so
The night-birds ceased to sing,
And under, in the row
Of thicket black and low,
Insects of strident wing
Were dumb. But Death's bright eye
Cleft all the blackness through;
And they could him espy
By it, as round it flew
Through all the mortised shade

Where boughs like thatch were laid.
An awful, baleful glow
Mantled him high and low,
And from his dreadful eye
Fell round him fearfully.

Thus they beheld Death coming, and back to the house they ran as before, saying that Death was stealing on, and was hard by. Then they said, "Death comes for Joseph." So, as before, the parents changed the name of the lad, and he who was Abi, and then Joseph, now became Ezra. Hardly had they done this in solemn manner, and instructed the lad himself that his name was Ezra, when Death entered, thinking that he had come well and silently. But when, taking great manners upon him, since he had them at his mercy, he commanded Joseph to come with him, there was no answer. And when again he spoke, the sick lad said, "I am Ezra," and the parents said, "We have no Joseph. If you have a warrant for Joseph, truly you have come astray, for this house has no child of that name." So again Death withdrew, being foiled again, and the lad recovered.

After this, Death changed his manner with mortals. What could he do with them if he came shaking the earth, thundering; or blackening the night, and making all nature sob and sadden?

Truly he must be no more like a king, a conqueror, an enemy, but must become a neighbor with men. For this manner of keeping him out by changing their names spread so far and so fast, that soon he could get none to go with him. Therefore, as I have said, he put away his dreadful majesty and changed his black raiment, and made himself the servant of the one good King, and came and walked and talked with men neighborly and kindly. This is the legend as I find it in Meuleville, of the way Death grew neighborly and drew men unto him.

THAMYRIS.

In the second book of the Iliad, Homer tells the story of Thamyris. He but outlines it, putting much in a few lines, as his wont is—just a big shape shown, and so an end of it. Chapman renders the lines thus:

> All the muses opposite in strife of poesy
> To ancient Thamyris of Thrace, did use him cruelly
> (He coming from Eurytos' court, the wise Oichalian King),
> Because he proudly durst affirm he could more sweetly sing
> Than that Pierian race of Jove, who, angry with his vaunt
> Bereft his eyesight, and his song that did the ear enchant,
> And of his skill to touch his harp disfurnished his hand.

But this, though graceful singing, is too long a form for Homer's stern epic brevity. I will render the lines as follows, and if they have not Chapman's adornments, they have Homer's simplicity:

> The muses meeting
> The Thracian Thamyris, made an end of his singing—
> He from Oichalia going, from Eurytos the Oichalian;
> Up stood he, flushed, boasting he would be victor,
> Though the Muses sang, daughters of Ægised Zeus;
> They, angered, struck him blind; his singing, too,
> Divine, they took, and made him forget his harping.

Homer gives herein only the bare challenge and the penalty—a very naked story. But one might accept from the great poet the story thus undraped—a bare shape, indeed, without garments, if only the whole body of it were given. Others make a longer story; and if these tell the tale as it is, Homer's is but half the body, as if the naked shape were not only unclad, but cut in two, and a half thrown away; yes, and in this case I think the upper half, or head of it, so that naught is left but the trunk, the heart and the countenance being gone. Homer sets forth the boastful challenge of Thamyris, as I have said, and thereupon the penalty as falling upon the challenge. But the challenge is not the cause of the penalty, as the story runs in other poets; and I find great content and pleasure in the longer form of it, wherein the penalty falls not on the challenge, but on the defeat of Thamyris after the Muse had accepted his challenge, and vied with him in a poetical contest. But even in this longer form I find a hidden instruction which is to be read by the mind under the words rather than by the eye in them. Wherefore I will tell the story for its instruction and pathos, according to the longer form of it in the poets, and that hidden sense, also, which they left to the soul of the reader.

The truth seems to be that Thamyris fell in love with the Muse. Which one of the nine his soul chose, I know not. This point I have examined, but found no authority on it. Then, at first, by my own mind, I thought it must be Euterpe; but afterward I could see no reason why it might not be Calliope or Thalia, and so will risk no more than that Thamyris loved the Muse. Here was yet no strange point in the story, but a very common one; yet of great interest. For always men have been loving women; and the Muse as well as other women, and very often better. Indeed, it is wonderful with what sighs and groans and vigils at midnight, and labors and prayers, many an honest fellow has burned in heart for the Muse. Another point, also, there was, which by no means was strange; Thamyris was very poor. So have they all been who have loved the Muse. Burton has a good passage in his "Anatomy" on this point: "Poverty is the Muses' patrimony, and as that poetical divinity teacheth us, when Jupiter's daughters were each of them married to the gods, the Muses alone were left solitary, Helicon forsaken of all suitors, and I believe it was because they had no portion.

> Calliope longum caelebs cur vixit in aevum?
> Nempe nihil dotis, quod numeraret, erat.
> (Why did Calliope live so long a maid?
> Because she had no dowry to be paid.)

Ever since all their followers are poor, forsaken and left unto themselves. Insomuch that, as Petronius argues, you shall likely know them by their clothes. 'There came,' saith he, 'by chance into my company a fellow not very spruce to look on, that I could perceive by that note alone that he was a scholar, whom commonly rich men hate. I asked him what he was; he answered, a poet. I demanded again why he was so ragged; he told me this kind of learning never made any man rich.'" To a like purpose Browning says in his description of a poet called "How It Strikes a Contemporary:"

"His very serviceable suit of black
Was courtly once and conscientious still,
And many might have worn it, though none did;
The cloak, that somewhat shone and showed the threads,
Had purpose, and the ruff, significance."

Here first the poverty is set forth, and then the meaning and presence of the man in his poor dress; but afterward, at the end of the poem, where the two thoughts are joined again, the meaning and spiritual state are set forth first, and the poverty afterward:

"Here had been, mark, the general-in-chief,
Thro' a whole campaign of the world's life and death
Doing the King's work all the dim day long,
In his old coat, and up to his knees in mud,
Smoked like a herring, dining on a crust—
And now the day was won, relieved at once!

No further show or need for that old coat,
You are sure, for one thing!"

Now, that Thamyris loved the Muse, and that he was poor, are no whit strange things, as I have said, but, indeed, common in themselves, and very natural and companionable together. But now follows in the story a third point, which is as common as the others, to wit: that the Muse looked but coldly on Thamyris. However he sighed, she regarded him not, she looked not on him. Let him groan as he would, she gave him no ear. Let him toil as he would and burn the midnight oil on the altar of his table, she but derided him. At last the poor love-lorn poet, out of all patience with the coldness, the flouts and mockings of his mistress, challenged her to a trial of skill. At this point all the poets agree that Thamyris turned boastful, and defied the Muse, as Homer says, declaring that he would surpass her in her own art, and show her, forsooth, what kind of a lover she had scorned. And this point is no stranger than the others; for never yet did I hear of a lover of the Muse who at last, past all forbearance with her sly tricks, did not hold up to her his poesy, and music, and defy her to put it down, do what she would. But here in the story comes an incident wider from the common, and, indeed, quite wonderful, the like

of which I have met with in the sorrows of no other lover of the Muse. Straightway the Muse accepted the challenge of Thamyris. Without more ado, she would meet him and contest with him. But if by this time Thamyris was past all virtue of patience, the Muse had fallen into a great rage. To be followed by such a fellow, she said, was bad enough; so close, indeed, that never could she stir but he was after her, beseeching her day and night, and lying in wait at all corners, however she flouted him. But to be defied by him at last, and challenged by him with high vaunting of himself, and boasting that he would put her into shadow in her own art, and win a victory of her, this was insufferable. What Muse could endure this? Whereupon she made a crafty condition in accepting the challenge, to wit, that whichever one should be vanquished should be wholly at the disposal of the victor.

Now, 'tis true, Thamyris had become no little boastful and self-confident; but truly the poor fellow must find some comfort, and since the Muse never would smile on him, it was but the part of a man to cease his groans and plaints and smile on himself. With this came a great strength of mind, and not a whit less love. As he could not beg his way to favor, he girded him-

self up to force it. If, in his new purpose, he drew his breath a little too deeply, and was a bit overboastful, it was but a brave fault. Behind his battle-spirit his love was as warm as ever. His soul was like the Duke Theseus with his Amazon love—

> Hippolyta, I wooed thee with my sword,
> And won thy love doing thee injuries;
> But I will wed thee in another key,
> With pomp, with triumph and with reveling.

The deed of Theseus was the dream of Thamyris, and surely it was valiant in him to be as bold before the strife as the Duke was after it.

Thamyris had a brave mind to conquer; nay, would admit nothing else to himself than that he would prevail. "I tell thee, my soul," quoth he, "'tis not for naught these many years that I have tuned my harp to sing for the cruel Muse! Now what skill I learned singing for her while she heeded not, will I use against her when she must strive with me. So shall I overcome her; then will she be my captive, to do with as I choose, and I will make her my bride, and show her she is my love, and seat her on the throne of my soul."

But, alas for Thamyris! Alas for his love and his pride! Alas for his flush of boastful triumph! The Muse is an agile foe. Let every mortal attend who is enamored of her like Thamyris.

Let him give heed to his fate. If he win her not by courting, let him count the cost a long time before he come to combat with her. For, if the Muse be cold to wooing, she is a very fury unto any rivalry. Thamyris was subdued. I know not on what judgment. I have found no record of this in the poets. 'Tis like enough the Muse brought her eight sisters to judge, and the unwary lover, having turned all the heat of his heart into his mind, was too proud of spirit to object to such a jury. For this reason it is, I suspect, that I find no records in the old poets that Thamyris sang and played ill at the trial. Nay, his name has come down to us as a great musician of his native Thrace; whence I conclude, that if his fall could not obscure his glory, he must have been indeed a notable singer, and no doubt discharged himself bravely at the contest. Homer scruples not to call him a divine singer, and the daughters of Zeus were no more. But, though he sang like all the Muses together, 'tis certain that the eight of them would not vote that he sang like the ninth. And so the hapless lover was declared vanquished, and lay at the mercy of the victor, the Muse. Now this contest, I have said, is a strange part of the story, and I have met the like of it never in any other, nor in any history; nor yet in my observations of life,

which is stranger than story. But what followed on the defeat of Thamyris falls back to the common —as common, indeed, as that he should fall in love with the Muse and thereupon woo and entreat her. For when the fallen poet lay at her mercy, the Muse first broke his harp to pieces in a rage with the instrument of the boldness of Thamyris, and then put out the eyes of the singer. It would have been more merciful if she had blinded him first; for what is dearer to a singer than his harp? And what greater grief than to see it torn in pieces by a fury, and strewn over the earth? But this did the Muse first, and compelled the singer to look on it, and then put out his eyes, if so I may interpret some hints in the story, with a splinter from his shattered lyre. This, I say, is but a common incident of the story. Never did any one know the Muse gentle to an aspirant who is overcome by her; no, but always very cruel. 'Tis strange, as one would think, that a daughter of gentle Mnemosyne should be so fell and wanton to a vanquished suitor. Yet often I have noted that Memory has cruel stabs for the conquered. But, however this, 'tis certain that it is a sad and hazardous adventure to confront the Muse. To woo her is pain; to follow her is "hope deferred," that "maketh the heart sick;" to engage with her is

danger; to be overcome by her is maiming and blindness, or any other cruelty she may devise.

Hereupon follows an incident in the story which is as natural as air and water. For never yet did an angry and triumphant Muse let her victim lie in a corner where he would fain hide himself; nay, but she brings a crowd to point at him and make sport. So, in the story, did the lovely nine. For when the one had vanquished Thamyris, and the other eight of them had given judgment of the victory, straightway they spread themselves over Olympus and over Helicon and over Parnassus, crying out everywhere that a rare sight was to be had, and a very gamesome sport to be made merry withal. Whereupon came trooping all the gods and the demigods and the semi-demigods and the nymphs of every kind, the dryads and the naiads and the hamadryads, the graces, the fates and the furies, the gray sisters—all these came trooping, I say, to see the rare sport of a poet blinded, and his harp broken.

They gathered around him, and a very lively company they were, forsooth, jeering and making great game of Thamyris; assaulting his ears, since no more they could confound his eyes; and making such a vile din and uproar, with such a clashing and clamor, that, according to one hint

of the story, all the nine muses lost a portion of their quick hearing and rhythmical sense in the noise; which is one reason why never it has been so hard to prevail against them since then as it was for the hapless Thamyris. Yet hard enough, and a dangerous adventure to try.

Here, now, at the conclusion come the pathos and the eloquence in the story. This, indeed, Homer passes over utterly, which the more is to be regretted since the grandeur of the father of epics would have lifted into the very skies the pathetic speech of Thamyris. When the blind singer heard all about him that dance of mocking glee, this "stuck a dagger in him," this cut him to the heart. Then he stood up and spoke to the Muse, saying that it was an evil deed to bring a rout about him to cheer at his fall and mock at his pain; for he said, that if he had erred, it was but love daring, which was no infamy; and if he had been maimed for his failure, he should be let go unsuccessful, but not mocked. This, I say, is the eloquent part of the story—this plea of Thamyris. The tale is told in verse by a mythologer of no note; wherefore to name him would be but to give note pedantically where there is none. So I will take his verse at this part without name, though I thank him, for indeed he has given the eloquent plea with simplicity:

Maiden Goddess, how will thy mother's nature
Work in thy breast after a deed like this?
For thou art Memory's daughter—sweet Mnemosyne;
How, then, can Memory in thy bosom bear
Forever to be laden with this deed?
Thou hast put out my eyes; well, then, my eyes
Had had their Paradise beholding thee.
'Twas fit they closed, nor any more should see
A common vision, that had looked on thee.
And thou hast split my harp—it lies in bits;
Well, then, my harp had its Elysium entered,
Playing to thee, and staid there while 'twas well,
Till to thy hand it came, and from it perished.
So eyes, so harp, each had its best, and ceased.
And so, if thou shouldst spill my life, I'd say
My life had had completion, loving thee.
But, Goddess, what did I to bring these jeers
From mouths I cannot see? Shame but the shameful.
I did but dare to love thee—that's no shame;
No, but my fame, loving too high for winning.
Was this a deed to set these mockers on
To grin into mine ear, now I am eyeless?
I ask thee but to let me fare forth, blinded
And of my harp disfurnished, but unscorned.

But they laughed to scorn the poet's simplicity. Whence always it has been the fact that he who dares the Muse and is overcome, is not let alone with his pain and his fall, but set on by all the people with laughter.

SYRINX.

The story of Syrinx is tender and pathetic in her part of it, by any version. But it has forms in which it is all lovely. The younger Montaltus, though whether from some more ancient source or out of his own mind he says not, has it thus: So long as Pan had Syrinx with him, he made no music; but when, by some envious Olympians, she was witched into a reed, of that same reed Pan made a pipe, and thenceforth he discoursed sweet music through her. It may be on that hint that the acceptable Ludovic fashioned his story of Syrinx; for I have met it not elsewhere, nor even a hint of the other personages whom he brings in, albeit he professes he has not invented them, but found them. I will transcribe the delicate story from the antique French of that engaging and affectionate old writer.

Pan dreamed of the pipe. The dream haunted him continually, and was to his spirit as the air he breathed was to his body. He had a dream of a wonderful music and voice which was to be made by a pipe, if only he could discover the

pipe, or the wood of which it must be made, or the right shape and making of it. But this never he could do, with all his roaming and searching. The pipe still was but a dream.

Now Pan was able to bear this very well and cheerfully. He could bear to roam long and search far, yet find naught. This was not a hard thing, because he had his faith; and it was so fervent that it seemed like the very pipe playing within him continually, and it kept him in good heart. But what he found hard to bear was that no one believed in his dream, or shared his faith; no one had ear for this music which filled him; and the longer he searched but found naught of which the pipe could be made, the more everyone slighted his dream, and smiled at his words about the music which in his soul he had, which was the pipe, but still hidden from him. This he found to be a great loneliness, a sad desert which he must journey through in his long quest of the pipe. The loneliness of an unshared and contemned dream—Pan found it bitter, heart-wearing, and at last dragged himself along sorrowfully.

While thus still he was dreaming, and looking everywhere for the pipe, but mournfully, he met a gentle nymph, Syrinx by name. When he told her why he was wandering and looking about

everywhere examining every new herb that he met with, and had disclosed to her the dream of the pipe, straightway she believed in it. Nature had composed Syrinx of many patterns, each lovely after its kind. She was as lissome as osiers, fair like tender mist in the sunlight, as true as still water, as cheerful as hill tops at morning, faithful like a star; and when Pan heard her voice, "O Syrinx," he cried, "now do mine outer ears first hear what my soul hath been hearkening. Thy voice is like what I have dreamed of the pipe."

"Which is a good omen," answered Syrinx. "Come, shall we search onward? I will join in looking for the pipe if thou wilt let me; for I know that if so it hath lived in thy heart, 'tis to be found somewhere, verily; for what is in the soul, some day will be in the hand. Hast thou shown anyone the music of this dream of the pipe?" said she.

"No one would listen," said Pan; "they called it folly, or madness, or vanity."

"They were but like hills without echoes," Syrinx answered, "not because no voice called to them, but because they had not crypts kindred to the voice to return it."

"But I have searched long and dreamed long," said Pan, "and it has been a lone traveling, often

with cold nights under the stars, unhoused, because the dream was in my head, and no one would lodge the dream."

"What matters what is passed?" answered Syrinx. "Thou hast a friend now, if thou wilt take me; for truly, I begin to feel the dream as audible in me as in thee it is. And for thyself, cheer thee! I behold thy head peaked with light, and thy face is as ruddy as the morning, thy limbs as strong as the shaggy woodlands and the rocky hoofs of the hills that gallop the clouds. Up! What have we to do but consult the dream and hunt the pipe this day? And after this day comes another—one at a time. All Olympus could do no more, and a busy bird doth no less."

So Syrinx, filled with the pipe-dream and the music, staid with Pan, looking about daily with as faithful eyes as his own. And the dream, and the search, and the wandering, which had been a sadness, now became a joy to Pan; for one pure sympathy and one brave heart, sharing his dream and believing in it, and rejoicing to see him in the light of it, was a world of strength. When Pan had no one by his side, he thought he needed many; but when he had one, he knew that one soul was a world.

Now, when Pan's joy in the dream and the

search was revived, he began to value it the more; and he bethought him that he had dreamed and searched so long that already he was old—he might come to his end without finding the pipe. So he wished even his dream and search for it to be preserved, since "What is in the soul, some day will be in the hand," said Syrinx. With this, he betook himself to Zelotypa, a lofty Heliconian, whom long he had called friend. She had some skill with the stilus. Pan told her of Syrinx, and of his new-heartened dream and search, and asked her to record them for him, against his falling, as might be, by the wayside.

"What? Will you make a common scrivener of me?" exclaimed Zelotypa.

"Not so," said Pan. "It is my meaning that you should be keeper of all, and see that all is saved and rightly framed; and I will put Syrinx in charge with you, because she knows all the matter, and will be a great help."

"What!" Zelotypa cried again; "will you make her even with me? Will you join my name with that meadow nymph?"

"Have it as you will, then," said Pan. "Syrinx said she believed you would not wish her with you, and she would fain see you have all the place, and she would do all the serving for you. Let it be so."

"Syrinx displeases me," said Zelotypa. "You confide in her, and tell her everything."

"She serves faithfully, and is my friend," said Pan. "And as to the confiding, Zelotypa, has anything been more notable than my confiding in you? Why is it right to confide in you, and wrong to confide in Syrinx?"

When Pan walked away, he went repeating to himself what he had said of the earnest and true service of Syrinx. "*Servit Syrinx,*" he said, over and over to himself. "*Servit Syrinx. Servit—servit—servit.*"

"Why art saying that?" asked Syrinx; for suddenly she was at his side. Always she was close by when needed.

"Let us sit down here," said Pan, "and consult how to look farther for the pipe. A notion has seized me."

With this a shadow came over the face of Syrinx. But soon it passed, brightly; for she was as cheerful as hill tops at morning, and seemed always to be looking off from a sunny height.

Zelotypa was not pleased; and the more she thought of Pan's words, the more inflamed was she. While wandering about in this mood, and conning the matter sorely in her mind, she met Suspicax. He had been long a friend of hers, and now he was in very high favor with her, owing

to his submission in a sharp matter. She had been offended because he had not answered promptly an epistle she had sent him. She heard that some words of hers about the poet Fusculus had not pleased Suspicax, and therefore wrote him; but he neglected her letter. For which she fetched him a blow on the cheek the next time they met, in a public place. But Suspicax visited her soon after, and so threw himself at her feet that she was pleased greatly with such a triumph, and made more of him than before. When Suspicax now saw her, he perceived at once that she was disturbed, and asked her the cause. She told him how Pan had annoyed her, by placing her in rank with Syrinx.

"'Tis very like," Suspicax answered; "I know Pan rates Syrinx highly, and holds her choicely. Awhile ago I saw them—but no matter."

Zelotypa caught at this quickly, and asked what Suspicax had in mind; which when he evaded, she fell on him with all her force to ferret it from him, and so urged, begged, commanded, threatened, that soon she had it.

"Why, it is no such very great matter," said Suspicax. "One day I came on them when they had been searching the woodlands for that same pipe-folly of Pan's. Syrinx had fallen suddenly ill, with a heavy anguish of the head and fever

from some wild roots which she had eaten. Pan then had builded a fire for her, and made her lie down before it on a lion-skin, put a lamb's fleece under her head, and covered her with a silken web, and raked the coals to her feet. And he brewed her a flask of hot camellia. All this I thought too careful and very improper."

"Good Suspicax," cried Zelotypa, "what news you bring me! Good Suspicax! I will forgive thee that blow I dealt thee, ten thousand times, for this. Go on, I pray thee."

"Why, that is all," said Suspicax.

"Delightful Suspicax! Admirable Suspicax!" said Z "But tell me, have not you spoken of th o Pan?"

" spicax, "though it is now a half-ye

d better," said Zelotypa. "Yet I e fresher. A half-year stales it a more as id naught to him at the 'tis nough. Now will I him I straiten him! Now

at it is a scurvy deed said Suspicax, "seeing it to Pan. He has been me no harm ever; and once, stood in a breach for me,

and the last time came not off without a wound which not yet is healed; ay, so; and another time when he stood by me was when you took me that slap on the cheek, Zelotypa."

"Good Suspicax, ah! say no more of that," said Zelotypa. "I will smite thee never again—I mean, unless thou displease me. Farewell. I must run to my tablets. Oh, excellent, excellent! Farewell! Dear Suspicax! Charming Suspicax!"

Zelotypa lost no time in dispatching a note to Pan. Thus she wrote:

"MASTER PAN: It will advantage you to attend on me. I have heard certain strange and unpleasant things. It will profit you to consider me. ZELOTYPA."

Here the acceptable Ludovic pauses to discuss, after his manner, whether Pan did well to visit Zelotypa on this demand. He concludes that it was ill-advised, as to judgment, to answer an epistle so impudent; but that merely to lay it aside with scorn, would be a struggle as to the heart, and as contrary to a long friendship as the writing of it was. Let those decide, therefore, says he, who in every case are able to assure themselves when the head ought to prevail, and when the heart.

When Pan came to Zelotypa, he found her

well arrayed to receive him, looking very severe and virtuous.

"What is this I hear?" said she—"that you have covered up sick Syrinx on a lion's skin, and made a fire for her, and rested her head on a lamb's fleece, and raked the coals to her feet!"

"Why, 'tis so," said Pan.

"And brewed her a flask of hot camellia!" said Zelotypa.

"Even so," said Pan.

"Oh, fie!" said Zelotypa.

"No, mistress," said Pan. "Shame grows not at your bidding. So did I, and so would I do again at like need; yes, and over and over, and please my soul in it. Else why is my head peaked with light, my countenance as ruddy as the morning, my limbs as strong as the shaggy woodlands and the rocky hoofs of the hills that gallop the clouds? For it is according to the nature and the health and the good heart of Heaven and earth, that if a man find a suffering woman, he should care for her tenderly."

"Fie, fie," said Zelotypa.

"Have your tinctured heart to yourself, then; I regard it not!" said Pan.

"Out of my sight!" cried Zelotypa, in so harsh a voice and with such a scream in her words, that Pan fled aghast, thinking the hills and

the rocks, which erst were his friends, were tumbled together in a tempest, and grinding stridently in his ear.

From Zelotypa, Pan went to Syrinx, which was like going from a March storm to a tender April sun, half shine, half dew. When Pan told what Zelotypa had said, again the shadow fell on the face of Syrinx, and she was silent a long time. Pan also was silent, but his heart swelled in him, fearing she would leave him, or if not so, then be torn from him—Syrinx, the only one who had cherished his dream and helped him seek the pipe.

"I am not hurt, nor can be," said Syrinx, at last; "and if thou be hurt, 'tis a reason why I should stay by thee the more."

"Thou art pure faith," said Pan. "But, Syrinx, I fear. All the Zelotypæ have been queens of the black art. So is this one. And when she is in a rage, she stops at nothing. I grieve greatly, for long has she been chambered in my affections; but I find she may hatch vipers' eggs on my hearth. Also I fear greatly, lest she part us, or kill thee, my child."

'It may be so," answered Syrinx; "I have forebodings and misgivings. But why should I say misgivings, since I am willing and ready, yea, and glad, if so it is to be. I have had a dream

which I fear is an augury. I dreamed we were sitting together, as often we have been, consulting of the pipe, when suddenly I was rapt away. I seemed to lose place without loss of being. I could not see myself; yet I *was* sight. I seemed to be nowhere, yet everywhere. From all sides of thee I could see thee, and behold thee in every part at once. I was like a sphere of sight without eyes. When I looked on thee, lo! thou hadst the pipe in thy hands. Our dream was true. What was in the soul had come into the hand, as it must. I saw thee handle the pipe rapturously. It was long and slender, and very graceful. I saw thee put it to thy mouth. Then when thy breath drew through it, I heard its voice issue, and it was my voice. Then I awoke, and found myself thinking of thee, but calling my own name. Was it not a strange dream? and the waking no less? I read it thus—that in some way I must give thee the pipe by a change or expiration in myself, since I cannot keep my voice and the pipe have it too. In what manner it will be I know not; but I am ready."

Zelotypa was not idle the while. She gathered some straw, wet it with her spittle, smeared it with pitch, and touched it afire from her anger-flaming cheek. From the smoke that arose she

spun a "black, contaminating mist," which streamed from her fingers like spouts of thick, noisome wind. It whirled over Pan and Syrinx, settled on them and clung about them, so that they could not see each other; their eyes burned, their very bones were pierced, and even the strong Pan shook and staggered. It was at this moment that the mighty voice mentioned by Plutarch, boomed over the Ionian Sea, spreading eastward over Greece, and westward over Italy, shaking Rome with fright, crying, "The great Pan is dead." When the filthy fog cleared, eaten up and removed, like all vile things, by the pure atmosphere, Syrinx was gone.

Pan beheld, hard by, a bed of reeds, such as never yet he had seen, slender, graceful, swaying and very beautiful; and they had not been there before. The wind seemed to draw a tender, murmurous voice from them. Pan ran to them, and heard the voice and name plainly, "Syrinx, Syrinx, Syrinx." He fell on his face beside the reeds, and moaned and cried his grief aloud. "O Syrinx," he said, "even the black art of Zelotypa could transmute thee to naught less lovely than this. Syrinx, how perfect wast thou! The tender rustle in the herbage and sweet clash of grass-blades was not so tender as the quiet voice of Syrinx. The soft dew of a flower's

honey-pit was not so soft nor gathered such sweetness as the gentle eyes of Syrinx. The nimble winds that wove the clouds were not so deft as the dear hands of Syrinx. The sap running in the earth and in the trees was not so quick to serve as the willing feet of Syrinx. The clear light of the morning was not so clear nor so revealing as the thoughts of the true mind of Syrinx. The warm fullness of the noon, when all was golden rest, was not so warm nor so enfolding as the loving heart of Syrinx. The holy stars of the wide heavens, when the straitened day was gone, were not so holy as the earnest soul of Syrinx. Oh! Syrinx, Syrinx!"

But while thus he moaned, the voice in the reeds grew stronger and changed. Now it was "*Fac Syrinx serviat! Fac Syrinx serviat—serviat—serviat—serviat!*" Pan gazed at the slender reeds; a light broke on his mind; he trembled. He cut the longest and most beautiful of them, made vents in its length for his fingers, fashioned it to his mouth, and when his breath drew through it, then came forth the voice of Syrinx.

Pan's search was over. The dream was fulfilled, the pipe was sounding. What was in the soul had come into the hand, as it must. Ah! by the sacrifice of Syrinx? Yes, it must be so. Syrinx must be given to all mortals. Thenceforth she became a music, forever.

The story needs no after-words as wardens to bring the after-thoughts home. They come in of themselves. How mighty is love to bestow itself! How often must it be sacrificed even unto death, before its work be done! A lonely dream in the soul is a sorrowful joy. The dream with the service of love is a blissful joy. But either lonely or love-shared, the dream is a piety, and hath the use of all things in earth and heaven, and is like in the spirit to a mighty stature of body, a head peaked with light, a countenance as ruddy as the morning, limbs as strong as the shaggy woodlands and the rocky hoofs of the hills that gallop the clouds.

ANTÆUS.

Eastward of London, where the fringes of the city overhung a green skirt of gardens, was a bridge (I speak of two hundred years ago) over a low brook, which sometimes was a ditch, being run dry. At the east end was a handsome elm, very old, to which a rail of the bridge was fastened. A huge branch of the root was bare of soil. Thither, late in the afternoon of a fair day, came one Master Dunn, a farmer's man, as known by his dress, and sat himself down on the bared root-stem. Said he:

"I hear he is staying with a knight in the country, and passes this way to the Apollo. Now I am here, sooth I feel a knocking at my ribs. But if he is more than I, by being a poet, I am as much as he by being a man. I will deal roundly with him. Though I be but a plowman, I'll not think myself a fool till I be proved so. I have read a few books in a few hours—a small pasture, but cropped close. What if all my books in the world be a spare six—nay, not six, only five, if I count out the almanac!

Have I not read them all a dozen times, twenty times? And for each time conned, have I not found in each book another book? Therefore I count I have read as much as a hundred books read once. Belike more; for it is better to measure myself with a good man to his utmost than wrestle slight bouts with many. Ay, I will be round with him, though he lord it over Apollo wits never so. Here he comes.

Hereat comes along Ben Jonson.

Dunn. Good even to you, sir.

Jonson. Good even to you, friend, and thank 'ee.

Dunn. I thought not a brave gentleman would use words so lightly.

Jonson. Ah! Why lightly?

Dunn. Did you not say "Friend?"

Jonson. Ay. Well?

Dunn. Yet you pass on as mum as an enemy with the watchword.

Jonson. Thou'rt a fine fisherman, good fellow; you jerk a man back with a word of him as it were a hook in his throat. Well, what would you? Look to thy sense quickly. I'll not stay with thee the halving of a second, if thou be tedious. "A tedious person is one a man would leap a steeple from, gallop down any steep hill to avoid him; forsake his meat, sleep, Nature

itself, with all her benefits, to shun him—a mere impertinent, one that touches neither heaven nor earth in his discourse. He opens an entry into a fair room, but shuts it again presently. I speak to him of garlic, he answers asparagus. Consult him of marriage, he tells me of hanging, as if they went by one and the same destiny;" chatters, and says naught to the business.

Dunn. You would frighten a man into dullness. Clutch not the throat of my mind so. Give me some air. What if I be dull in good earnest? Canst thou endure no ignorance in search of knowledge? Hast thou no debt unto manners? "The mixing of courtesies aright by a man is the mixing of respects for his own sake and for mine. He that doth them merely for his own sake is like one that feeds his cattle to sell them; he has his horse well drest for Smithfield."

Jonson. Now where got you that? Can you pick a mind like a pocket?

Dunn. Nay, but I have met a good lad or two of the Apollo crew, though I only shamble beside them where they walk.

Jonson. I warrant you will but prattle me some news. You wish to tell me of that elephant.

Dunn. Elephant? What one?

Jonson. Faith, he that would steal the king's castle.

Dunn. Steal the king's castle?

Jonson. Ay; hast not heard of him?

Dunn. Not a whistle; not so much as "mum."

Jonson. No? Why, "that an elephant came hither ambassador from the great Mogul, which could both write and read, and was every day allowed twelve cast of bread, twenty quarts of canary sack, besides nuts and almonds the citizens' wives sent him; that he had a Spanish boy to his interpreter, and his chief negotiation was, to confer or practice with Archy, the principal Fool of State, about stealing hence Windsor Castle, and carrying it away on his back if he can."

Dunn. Is *that* all thou hast? Thou'rt stale. The end is that the chief cook killed the beast with a spit, and shipped him back, packed in his own trunk, tied up with his tail, except the bones, which make combs for all the queen's ladies.

Jonson. Ha! Well, what's thy cause now for stopping me?

Dunn. None, but that I love thee.

Jonson. Love me? Dost? Why, we are commanded to love our neighbors and our enemies; but I am neither.

Dunn. Methinks it is a good saying, "All men's friend, no man's friend." Yet I trow I could make a better—No man's enemy, every man's neighbor.

Jonson. Apt! Thou quotest well, and enlargest better. I have met a saying that he who takes a good thing from another is next to him who composed it, and not far after. Which is to say that to know the good is close to making it.

Dunn. The same thing, sir: for to know the good is to love it perforce; and to love it is to make it over again in oneself.

Jonson. "*Aut Erasmus est aut Diabolus!*"

Dunn. What's that, sir?

Jonson. Ay, faith, that were a nugget not ill mined for my "Discoveries."

Dunn. What say'st thou?

Jonson. Latin. The English is, Thou hast some wit.

Dunn. I fear my wit is all in your eye. I have read this, that the eye is like a colored glass; all nature is painted with it. A man back of a witty eye finds everything well furnished.

Jonson. Sooth, thou seemest a rare, ripe fellow. But however thou twist it to make a neighbor of me—

Dunn. Nay, call it not twisting, master. 'Tis as good Holy Writ as the command to love our neighbors and our enemies. For the Book says he is our neighbor to whom we may do good

offices. And thou may'st do excellent service for me now; which made me bold to hail thee.

Jonson. Thou knowest me not.

Dunn. Nay, 'tis the other way, Master Jonson. Say thou knowest not me, and 'tis well; for I can be seen only where I am. But thou art nimble and visible where thou art not.

Jonson. What's thy name?

Dunn. I am called Dunn, sir, Master Dunn, at your service.

Jonson. Truly a good name, wholly good at a conclusion, and half good at the beginning—as the saying is, "Well begun is half done." Now, what's your conceit, that I am visible where I am not?

Dunn. Why, in thy plays.

Jonson. Ah! I will e'en sit me down with thee awhile. Belike I shall extract much matter from thee while I give a little. For your man who makes books, always must squeeze out more than he gives; else whence shall come the books? I pray thee get thee up on this rail and let me have the seat on the root-stem; thou hast not such a paunch as mine. So. Well, what would you with me?

Dunn. Why, Master Jonson, in truth and for the whole matter, just to see a poet, to talk with one, once in my life.

Jonson. So. To hang your jaw at me, on a bank, as I were Scoto of Mantua myself—eh?

Dunn. What's that, sir?

Jonson. Small matter. Now, why see a poet?

Dunn. Thus I thought, Master Jonson: A poet is but a man. He must eat, sleep, wake, stretch his legs and his ears, open his eyes, wag his tongue, go privying, like another man. He hath all the organs, and no more. What can he scape that any rustic must do? But he is like a man who hath a lantern, whereby he can walk where others stop, in the dark, and catch elves and pixies in their corners. Now, quoth I to myself, if I stand to him manfully, yet with good respect, as one may and should to any man, belike I may get a gleam from the lantern and have a near sight of it.

Jonson. Is it so? Well, I know not that I like thy figure of the poet, Master Dunn; for I think, as one says in Sweet Will's merry comedy, the man should be in the lantern or the lantern in the man; for the poet and his poem are one. But this I will tell thee, taking thy allegory, that I, the poet, get my lantern from you.

Dunn. From me?

Jonson. I mean from you commoners, you people that mix with the soil, with dung-heaps and taverns and old shoes, ay, and with good

women in small cabins where an English home sits like a spirit in the chimney watching the kettle on the crane. From you the poet lights his lantern in two ways. First, from your love of the poet, which I can tell you gives you as much riches as the best poet can hunt with his candle. I remember a saying of Johan Albus, discoursing of the sweet verses of Rivi, when by chance that minstrel trod down a gowan, which grieved him. Hast seen Rivi's songs, Master Dunn? But they are not translated.

Dunn. Nay, I have but a spare five books, and I know only the king's tongue.

Jonson. Thou hast read them with a hundred eyes, then; and one tongue is as much as any man can use at its best. But of this Albus—I was telling thee that when he hath spoken of Rivi's verses on the crushed gowan, then saith he (by memory; I have it not exactly): Here must we stop to think what privilege one had who was not Rivi; for it were sad if a man must be either a poet or a nothing, a clod. Many a time before Rivi, and since, a good swain has crushed a flower and bloomed with his eye to it, as the blossom unto him. But he could not sing the song, he could not be the poet. No; but he could love the poet; and the gift of admiration, says Albus, is as divine as the dig-

nity of being admired. To which I will add that no man that is not generous to praise hath much worth to be praised. Therefore you may see, Master Dunn, that from you hearty men, lovers of poets, the poet must light his torch, and he must admire you well if he will be admirable. Now, your second way of lighting the poet's lantern (still by leave of your figure) is by your strong speech, which a poet must learn to stomach like beef and ale. I tell thee, Master Dunn, the strong words lie where the strong limbs are, close to the ground, and a skull that can bear a rap at singlestick will not crimp pie-crust speech for his talk. I mean, 'tis where the hearty, the homely, the unlaced, the low-collared, the lusty and sturdy and sincere are, the yeomen at their games, their quips, their griefs, and where they drink and gossip, that you will find words flying like young hawks. Go to your drest and laced company at dinner, and your hawk is a magpie. Even but now, as I was trudging along when you called me, Master Dunn, I was thinking on this same matter, and conning over the ancient story of Antæus as an image of it. Thou rememberest that story?

Dunn. Nay, I never knew it.

Jonson. Antæus was a mighty giant, son of Neptune and Terra. He was so great a wrestler

that he made a vow and labor for himself, which was no less than to do to death so many foes that he should build a temple to Neptune of their skulls. In which he was faring well, and had knocked over many men right and left and bleached their skulls, when along comes Hercules, and says: "My lad, thou hast had enough of that sport," and falls on him with his fists. Then it was Greek with Greek, and a tug indeed. Hercules gave the giant a throw; but up he pops, not only no worse, but the better; for he drew strength from his mother's breast, say the poets; that is, it was his virtue and quality to rise ten times stronger as often as he touched the earth. On this, Hercules lifted him up into the air, and held him aloft while he squeezed the strength from him, and stopped his collecting of men's skulls by topping the pile with his own. Now it needs no great wit, Master Dunn, to make the story an image of the virtue of language; as thus: Antæus was born of Neptune and Terra, which is to say that he was compounded of water and earth, and was like to both of them. Now, language is of the earth; but it exhales to the sky in poetry and scholars' fancies and folk-lore and folk-love, like watery vapors, and shines far up. Yet, it becomes naught unless it return to the soil again, to plunge to the

heart of the earth; which is to say that language must be touching the ground continually, and caught when it has become a bright dew on the sod; that is, when it has the life of the sturdy and natural people, not the courtliness of the scholar. Hercules, holding up the giant and squeezing him to death, is the taking of words up into the high air of the gentry and nobility, so that no more they touch the ground of the folk-talk. Then they lose their juice of strength, and soon dry up to a death of meaning.

Dunn. I mind me now of a limner whom late I heard say he forsook the halls and stalls of my lords and my ladies, and betook him to the booths where the people danced and tippled and ate roast pig; for there he saw men in a kind of naked nature, lively and fresh.

Jonson. 'Tis the same thing. The like is to be noted in Ugo. Ha! there's a wild poet for you! But a huge one—*Ugo domitor victorque!* He tosses up things, and mingles good and bad like a storm; but he cleanses like a storm too. It is to be seen, as well has been said, that he is master of all dialects, and knows all words of the court, banquets, velvets and gowns, of law-courts, of bankers and money-changers, of war, the sea, philosophy, gangs of convicts, of hovels and slaves, trades, antiquarians, scavengers. In

like manner 'tis said of M. Erfilius that "he liked to talk with horsemen and coach-drivers," because he enjoyed their quick words and fine brag; and he hath said of himself that he liked to saunter among the poor and the low, in their quarters, because he found the undress, the natural attitudes, the easy ways of the folk fall into finer pictures than the clean-shaven and the silk-robed in their rich streets made; and if one have a waked-up mind, saith he, he will be curious about the living and talking of other men, especially of those common folk whose minds have not been tamed and crimped and set to a fashion in the schools. But, above all, Will, sweet Will, "Avon's Swan!" he dipped and sipped and flew everywhere like a bird. He was pure freedom. He knew no drag on his wings—nay, not weight enough, for he tumbled antics in the air that belonged to no geometry; and this I say, though "I love him on this side idolatry as much as any." He had not the store of my learning, but neither the lumber of it. Where think you, Master Dunn, that "Star of Poets" reaped his glossary? Where got he his words, such a sand-o'-the-sea of fit vocables for every passion? I tell you in ale-houses, and with cobblers, leather-dressers, tinkers, plowboys, players. Will you say that Slender, Shallow, Bar-

dolph, Dame Quickly, and a hundred of the like, are more living in his pages than his lords and ladies, as some schoolmasters and solemn dunces have said? Why—bless thee, so they are in life. They have a freedom; they are perfect in kind; they stretch themselves and spread. The same is to be learned from the Finniad.

Dunn. The Finniad? Tell me what that is, Master Jonson.

Jonson. 'Tis a creature that lives in Finland, and snaps off the heads of men that come by him.

Dunn. Eats men? Many?

Jonson. Oh, a multitude.

Dunn. Ah! Have on with thy humor. Be merry. Patch it out. What manner of beast is he?

Jonson. Did I say "Beast?"

Dunn. Faith, no; thou saidst a creature. But is not he a beast that eats men's heads off?

Jonson. Sooth, that turns on the manner of his doing it. If he behead them with his jaws, he is a beast; but if by his wit, he may be an angel that takes off noddles which merit to be done with for having nothing in them.

Dunn. But thou saidst he parted a multitude from their heads. Nay, be merry!

Jonson. And is not the world doltish amain? I know of one Johannes who saith "the world is

one enormous fool;" and another of this very kingdom, who saith this pretty little isle hath so many thousands of people (I hold not his figures) "mostly fools."

Dunn. Why, here's a merry turn about. The people shoot healthy words, flames whereat a poet may light his candle with syllables; and anon they are fools. Hast thou had a sudden smart? I believe thou rakest up the coals of thy anger about thy play that was damned. Rare Ben Jonson is mad being damned, and is like to be damned being mad, calling his brothers fools. Methinks if I read the good Book aright, it rolls a man in brimstone especially for crying "Fool" in anger.

Jonson. Save thy little wit, Master Dunn, lest thou meet the Finniad and be eased of thy noddle. I am not angry because my play was damned, for the sorry people damned it but as the devil damned heaven, and was damned himself thereby.

Dunn. Hum! Prithee now, ease thee of thy jest. What is this Finniad?

Jonson. Truly, it is a long poem like unto the epics of other peoples. I met a wandering Finn awhile ago, and he recited me some songs, which had the same names and persons in them all; and he said there were many songs like them

among the Finns. Whence I concluded the ballads were scraps of an ancient epic, like to Homer's, which had become broken up and scattered in bits among the people. So I dub it the Finniad.

Dunn. But how does it behead men? What's thy wit in that?

Jonson. Well, Master Dunn, if there be anything which lops from a noodle his fool's-pate more than a poet, and sets him going wild without his head, and turns your dunces' noddles inside out to betray the addling of them, and makes your dolt show for what he is when he hath taken fine airs on him and seemed brave—if there be one that more instructeth the wise or more discovereth and dementeth the foolish and driveth them into mad herds where they prance together and shake their horns in their folly, and think their madness a possession of angels, and kiss each other as the only lovers and the only brave and the only seeing and knowing ones of the world, full of the rare grace of a lost wisdom, but now discovered again by their fine spirits—if there be one who does this more than a poet, show me him, I pray you.

Dunn. And if they be all mad, then it is the poets that make them so?

Jonson. No; but being fools before, they take the poets the wrong way, and grow worse.

Dunn. And they be *all* fools?

Jonson. Vast; save thee and me and the Apollo lads.

Dunn. Bah!

Jonson. 'Tis so. I have met one Browne, of Norwich, a young fellow, but to be heard of yet. I have seen a manuscript he hath which he calls "Vulgar Errors," and a keen play of good sense it is, besides learning. He saith of the people that "their individual imperfections being great, they are, moreover, enlarged by their aggregation, and being erroneous in their single numbers, once huddled together they will be error itself," of which he gives many pleasant instances. "It might have hazarded the sides of Democritus," says he, "had he been present at that tumult of Demetrius, when the people, flocking together in great numbers, some crying one thing and some another, and the assembly was confused, and the most part knew not wherefore they were come together, notwithstanding, all with one voice for the space of two hours cried out, 'Great is Diana of the Ephesians.' It had overcome the patience of Job, as it did the meekness of Moses, and would surely have mastered any but the longanimity and lasting sufferance of God, had they beheld the meeting in the wilderness; when, after ten great miracles in Egypt and some in the same

place, they melted down their stolen ear-rings into a calf, and monstrously cried out, "'These are thy gods, O Israel, that brought thee out of the land of Egypt.'"

Dunn. But this same thing—not the people's folly, as now thou say'st, but their good sturdy value, as thou saidst first—was to be learned of the Finniad. How is it to be learned?

Jonson. Oh! ay. There is a fair story in the Finniad, very fair and like a picture, which may be made of a like imagery with Antæus. Thus it is: The great iron-worker, Ilmarinen, was set a task, to forge a magical mill or some such toy, that should grind out grain at will, or aught else wanted. He set up his furnace, his anvil and bellows, cast in the proper metals and fluxes and charms, and set men at it. For three days they pumped the bellows without a stop. I noted in these songs that everything was done three times or for three days, never less nor more. I have met the same over and over, in all folk stories; and "thereby hangs a tale." It were well, I think, if some Aquinas or Scotus or some of your sure *theologi* would ponder that. But that's aside. When the men had worked at the bellows "first one day and then a second, then the third from morning till evening," Ilmarinen got him down on his knees and peered into the furnace,

to the very bottom of it; but not a sign of the magic mill was there, not so much as a shade of the frame of it. At this the great iron-worker sent the men packing, and called on the four winds, East, North, West, and South, to blow the fire. Then awoke a commotion indeed. The winds came roaring, and puffed with all their cheeks for yet another three days. When then Ilmarinen got him to his knees as before, and peered between the blasts of the wind to the bottom of the furnace, there was the mill complete in the fire, even to the lid of it, which shone with a thousand colors. Now herein lies the imagery, that the mighty blacksmith could do naught till he ceased working with bellows blown by men, and called on Nature for his blasts.

Dunn. 'Tis a good, fair story indeed, and I like it much better than your young Browne with his "Vulgar Errors." Now, Master Jonson, resolve me this: If the people be such fools, doltish apart, and like a mad-house when huddled together, how comes it that sturdy living language is to be found with them only, close to the ground, as thou saidst?

Jonson. Now you think you plant a dart in me! Here it is again. It did but dent my cloak. There are good reasons, Master Dunn,

why the louts do better than the fine people; for with their folly they have Nature, which corrects them; but the polite with their knowledge have schools and fashions which pervert them and dress them up. One reason is that the commoners, whatever folly they have in their head-pieces, have great hearts. Now, the heart goeth farther in knowledge than the head. The heart is a very prophet for divining. If your mighty head be master in politic affairs, 'tis your great heart that hath a hold on divine things and charitable things. Know you not the Scripture, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings"? Now your politic must come down sometime and bow itself to the simple, and to heavenly powers. I am not a preacher, Master Dunn; but a poet must say this much. Therefore they that have great hearts have a main advantage. Besides, 'tis the heart chiefly that hath one of the greatest springs of sound knowledge—I mean the seeing things in the whole. It is given out in Plato's "Banquet" that once on a time man and woman were joined together in one body; but Jove cut them in two, and thereupon the severed halves wandered about looking for each other, to become whole again. Since which time, the heart hath not looked on things piecemeal, as wit is prone to look, but all together,

to make a whole of them, and love them in unity; which is a very great point for knowledge or wisdom. There is another reason. The follies of these fools are various; and though each man's one or two follies and arrant simplicities may roll in waves over him and drown him for a very dolt by himself, yet when the people are gathered in numbers, the crest of one man's folly fills up the hollow of another man's, and their various stupidities correct each other, so that the simple people come to a level where the common great heart of them may run. This is so unless they fall into the madness of some passion, fury, popular rage, when they become a mob. A mob is but simplicity raging, as scalding is no more than bland water boiling. If they be not misled into some passion, then their follies are but holes and pegs; when put together, all is whole. But wisdom, friend, is all one, ever but one and the same. Therefore, when many simpletons are gathered and taken together, their follies are dispersed, changed, destroyed, one by another, but their wisdom, being all one, amasses to a great weight. Thus the follies of all the fools together are not so great nor work so much as their wisdom. Though I like well what the youth Browne saith of their "individual imperfections," yet I part with him when he

saith that they are "enlarged by their aggregation, and being erroneous in their single numbers, once huddled together they will be error itself." That Albus whom I have mentioned saith differently, and uses a beautiful image. Not a drop of attar, says he, can you get from a single rose: seethe them by acres, and the subtle elixir distills.

Dunn. Troth, Master Jonson, an image that is as sweet as the odor. Good sooth, I can sniff the oil in the air this moment.

Jonson. Have you bethought you, Master Dunn, what a wondrous thing a word is? I have made trial of the marvel of syllables by sitting me down to make up words. With all my scratching, and conning, and trying, and beating of my head, and matching of letters, I have not made above one or two to my content in an hour, and these, when I had laid them by and forgotten them, were but uncouth, awkward, sprawling and soundless things when I came to them again. This I have tried not once, but thrice and more, until I perceived that I could as well create clouds and stars, birds and antelopes, as words. Yet what vats of round, rich words have the common folk brewed. Take names of men and places at a venture—Ben More, Ben Wyvis, Ben Voirlich, Cheviot, Plinlimmon, Pyrenees, Vesu-

vius, Hebron, Zion, Horeb, Carmel, Lucerne, Unterwalden, Zurich, Etruria, Modena, Campagna, Xenophon, Demosthenes, Archimedes, Delilah, Eleazar, Behemoth, Bethlehem—one might recite forever. These are as splendid as colored lights. Even if one take the names that smack of comedy, like Macgillicuddy, they are not made at will, more than a monkey, but are as fine in their motions as any other antic of Nature, and have life. Then bethink you of the variety of languages, each having its own nature and concord of sounds, and the millions of fair and rich words in them, wherein the breath in the throat is as musical as wind in trees, and tell me whether we be not in a maze of wonders as great as the heavens. "Eloquence is a great and divine thing," Master Dunn; "nor did she ever favor any man so much as to be wholly his. He is happy that can arrive to any degree of her grace." But none can do that unless they come out into the air, and get to the ground where the words are both made and a-making. If they stay in schools and curtains, and browse at fine dinners, they cannot be eloquent. They may seem fresh and fine to those who are staler yet by longer steeping in the close vapors; "but draw them forth into the just lists, let them appear *sub dio*, and they are changed with the place,

like bodies bred in the shade; they cannot suffer the sun or a shower or brave the open air; they scarce can find themselves that were wont to domineer so among their auditors. But indeed, I would no more choose a rhetorician by his reigning in a school, than I would a pilot by his rowing in a pond."

Dunn. You make good words very virtues, truly Christian graces, the fruit of honest living.

Jonson. 'Tis so, Master Dunn. "There cannot be one color of the mind, another of the wit. Wheresoever manners and fashions are corrupted, language is. It imitates the public riot. The excess of feasts and apparel are the notes of a sick state; and the wantonness of language, of a sick mind." It hath come to such pass that "nothing is good that is natural. Right and natural language seems to have the least wit in it. That which is writhed and tortured, is counted the more exquisite. Nothing is fashionable till it is deformed; and this is to write like a gentleman. All must be as affected and preposterous as our gallants' clothes, sweet-bags, and night-dressings."

Dunn. Truly thy tongue is a smart whip for them, Master Jonson.

Jonson. Rather say an honest rapier for mine own defense, Master Dunn. It hath become so

bad now that they who go straight to the point with few words, and these agile, elastic, graceful, strong, simple, swift—like an arrow straight and well-feathered—seem the very ones who are affected, they are so far and so different from the general. It is the plague of our craft, Master Dunn, the craft of the pen, that everyone thinks he understands it. I was told but now of a tinker who would mend my plays. He mends his pans, why not plays and poems? I am too exact and severe, I have a model, says he; I am too high-flying, I sweep the skies, and I am too learned, says he. Now look you, Master Dunn, I may say to such conceits, Away with you, bats! And, indeed, they do hide with the light; but if they flee from the day, they fly in the darkness, and may get in my hair, ay, and have on a time, and they scratch and bite like imps. I know naught of tinkering, and I know that I know naught. But your tinker, knowing naught of versing, or orating, or preaching, thinks he knows, and prates of it. Yet my craft is a very hard one to be learned. Say the tinker set himself to learn versing, and I set myself to learn tinkering; I will make pans to his good pleasure a long age before he will model verses to my content. 'Tis thus that "the coming of a good poet is so thin and rare among us. Every

beggarly corporation affords the state a mayor or two bailiffs yearly; but a king or a poet is not born annually." Ah, the blind bats! 'Tis sad when a thing that, if there be a tinge of light, knows not where it flies, has claws. Then, too, there are creatures that evermore buzz in a base, impudent hurry, and put a girth around your mind with a tape of inches. "I have met many of these rattles that made a noise and buzzed. They had their hum, and no more." What can a poet do but wait on Nature, and not vex her? Nay, I know a deep scholar who told me he never could write but first he must idle two or three hours and look out of window. So with the poet; he must go earnestly, which is slowly. If it come not at one time, "try another time with labor. If then it succeed not, cast not away the quills yet, nor scratch the wainscot, beat not the poor desk, but bring all to the forge and file again; turn it anew. If it come in a year or two, it is well." But now there be such busy-bodies at large that if a man be hidden a month, or get some aid, or find a fellow-scholar to advise him, "Where be your results?" cry these mites—tongues in bell-heads, clacking with a great noise of nothing. A base ignorance! Pah! the insects!

Dunn. There are three knowledges, Master Jonson—good, neuter, and base. If a man get

him much to horse-races, cock-fights, and the like, silly games and flirting, he may have a heavy weight of such news, and yet in respect of knowledge it is a feather. Then there are bad things, of which to have knowledge in the head argues being used to them in the body. That is the base knowledge. Good knowledge is knowledge of good things, either useful things or beautiful. In like manner there are three ignorances. Not to know evil is a good ignorance. Not to know trifles is a neuter ignorance. It is a base ignorance—ay, the basest—not to know what is modest, what impudent, forward, brazen-faced—a raw and coarse grain of ignorance.

Jonson. Excellent, i' faith. Thou hast a round good sense. Where got you that treatise of knowledge and ignorance?

Dunn. Troth, must a man always get his sense somewhere? Can his own sconce grind nothing? I got it out of my own heart-chest of comfort for me. Being but an ignorant fellow, I have told myself, for my comfort, that I can get some of the good knowledge and 'scape all the bad ignorance by looking on men with a right reverence.

Jonson. As the fairy queen saith to Bottom, "Thou art as wise as thou art beautiful," which is to say, as wise as thou art modest. For modesty is the beauty of a man—or of a woman

either. And 'tis a beauty like the beauty of an antelope; the fairness is his swiftness too, and vigor. Shade of Saturn! there is Wyatt a-coming for me! The lads miss me. I have loitered too long with thee. Pay me back my time now, by coming with me at expense of thine own.

Dunn. Whither?

Jonson. To the Apollo.

Dunn. I?

Jonson. Why not?

Dunn. But I am—

Jonson. Wilt thou say I am a dunce, to tell me what thou art when I have talked with thee this hour?

Dunn. But in these clothes?

Jonson. Tut, man! Take off thy hat, and thou hast as good a grass bonnet as nature thatches my lords withal. For the rest, draw thy wit over thee. Come!

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